

City of Kirkland TREE CODE FAQ



Visit kirklandwa.gov/trees and review **Kirkland Zoning Code Chapter 95** for complete code requirements

1 How many trees can I remove?

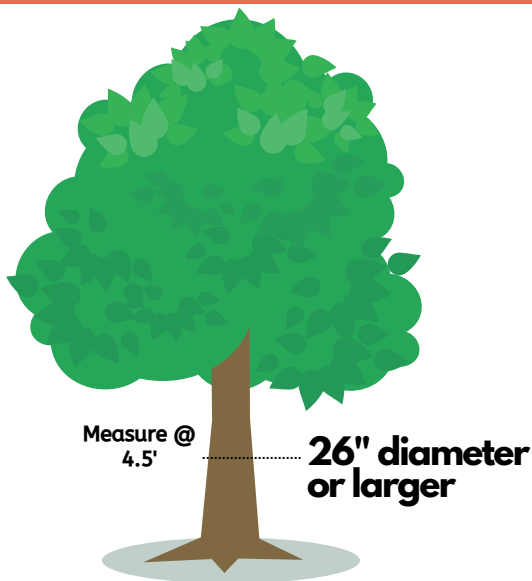
Allowable tree removals depends on your property size and whether there are special conditions such as critical areas, Landmark Trees, or recent development.

For lots without special conditions, homeowners can submit a **free** Tree Removal Allowance to remove trees per the table on the right.

**Need more information about your property?
Call 425-587-3600**

Lot Size (square feet)	Allowed removals per 12 months*
Up to 10,000	2 trees
10,001 to 20,000	3 trees
20,001 or greater	4 trees

*Properties must also retain a minimum of 2, 3 or 4 trees based on lot size to qualify for tree removal allowances



Landmark Trees require a permit for removal

3 replacement trees must be planted from an approved list of species

See kirklandwa.gov/trees for more information

2 Are there restrictions on the removal of large trees?

Trees 26 inches diameter or larger (Landmark Trees) have special protection requirements.

Property owners may remove up to 1 Landmark Tree per 12 months as long as there are no special restrictions for their lot.

Otherwise, you must have the tree assessed by a Qualified Arborist and the Landmark Tree must meet the City's hazard or nuisance criteria.

For any Landmark Tree removal, you must submit a Private Tree Removal Permit (fees apply).

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3 Can I prune my trees without a permit?

Generally, a permit is not required to prune trees on private property. If pruning results in **more than 25% canopy removal or includes topping**, the City considers this tree removal and you must submit a permit or notification (whichever is applicable).

For trees located in critical areas (wetlands, streams, steep slopes), you must first obtain written permission from the City before pruning. This ensures pruning will not damage these fragile ecosystems.

Why does the City prohibit tree topping?

- ✗ Stresses trees by removing most of the foliage and starving the tree
- ✗ Creates large wounds more susceptible to insect and disease infestation
- ✗ Can lead to sunburn of tree tissue and branch death
- ✗ Results in tree decay which increases likelihood of failure
- ✗ Can result in unacceptable risk due to new shoots growing from decayed/weak areas



Topping is the indiscriminate cutting of tree branches to stubs or lateral branches that are not big enough to assume the terminal role

Source: www.treesaregood.org

Who is responsible for removing a right-of-way tree?

Hazard is to...

Private Property

Examples: private home, cars parked in driveway



Responsible party is...

Adjacent homeowner

Adjacent homeowner must submit a permit to the City and hire a contractor to perform the removal if approved

Hazard is to...

Public Property

Examples: pedestrians on sidewalk, cars parked or driving along road



Responsible party is...

City of Kirkland

Adjacent homeowner must submit a permit to the City and the City will schedule the work in order of priority based on tree condition

4 Can I remove a tree along the street right-of-way?

Trees located along streets and on public property provide an amenity to all. Because of this, the City requires that all tree removals on public property go through the permitting process.

To be approved for removal, the tree must present a hazard that cannot be mitigated through normal & routine maintenance such as pruning.

! Emergency Tree Removals

If you believe a tree located on public property presents imminent risk (i.e., is actively failing or severely damaged), you should contact the City ASAP at 425-587-3600

For any public tree removal, you must submit a Public Tree Removal Permit (fees apply).