

Overview

The purpose of the City's Tree Protection and Preservation Ordinance is to establish regulations that will have the effect of protecting, promoting, and maintaining a healthy, diverse, and mature canopy of native and naturalized hardwood and ever-green tree species.

Trees preserve the ecological balance of the environment, control erosion, sedimentation and storm-water runoff, provide shade, reduce heat and glare, reduce flooding, enhance property values and aesthetics, abate noise pollution, and buffer incompatible land uses.

Who to contact?

For more information, please visit City Hall or contact the Safety Harbor Building Department at 727-724-1555.



City of Safety Harbor

750 Main Street • cityofsafetyharbor.com • 727.724.1555

Tree Protection & Preservation



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a protected tree?

Any *living native shade tree* or Sabal Palmetto (Cabbage or Sabal Palm) having a DBH of 4 inches or greater

What is DBH?

Diameter Breast Height (“DBH”) means the diameter, in inches, of a tree measured at 4.5 feet above the existing grade.

Do I need a permit to remove a protected tree?

Yes. It shall be unlawful for any person, without first obtaining a permit, to cut down, damage, top, poison, replace, replant, or effectively remove through excessive injury, or in any manner destroy or cause to be destroyed any protected tree.

What criteria is used to determine if a permit will be approved?

City Staff shall approve a permit only when one or more of the following criteria are met:

1. The Protected Tree(s) to be Removed pose a safety hazard to pedestrians or vehicular traffic, threaten to cause disruption of public services, or pose a safety hazard to persons or buildings;
2. The Protected Tree(s) to be Removed are weakened by age, fire or other injury; or
3. The Protected Trees to be Removed must be Removed in order to construct improvements that are proposed as a result of:
 - (a) Need for access immediately around the proposed structure for construction equipment;
 - (b) Need for access to the building site for construction equipment;
 - (c) Essential grade changes;
 - (d) Surface water drainage and utility installations; or
 - (e) Location of primary building pad, primary foundation line, swimming pool, patio pad, or that portion of the driveway within the path of the garage or carport entrance, and these structures cannot be relocated.

What trees are exempt from permitting?

Any tree that is not on the protected tree list and any tree listed on the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council’s most recent Invasive Plant List I and II are not protected tree species. For more information, contact the City Arborist at 727-724-1555.

Do I need a permit to prune or trim a protected tree?

No. The pruning of trees as normal maintenance is exempt from permitting provided such pruning does not result in mutilation, death, or removal of the tree. Topping, excessive pruning, or the removal of more than one-third (1/3) of the tree’s leaf canopy is prohibited.

How much does a tree removal permit cost?

The application fee for residential parcels is \$25 and for all other parcels is \$100.

Do I have to replace trees being removed?

Protected Trees removed under the provision of this Code shall be replaced as follows: Tree Replacement Ratio based on the DBH inch of Protected Tree removed or, where a suitable location for replanting on the property is not available, a fee in lieu thereof shall be paid.

What is a replacement tree?

Protected Tree having a minimum of two-inch trunk diameter measured twelve (12) inches above grade, a minimum crown of four (4) feet, minimum height of eight (8) feet upon planting, and a minimum nursery grade of Florida #1 or better according to current edition of Grades and Standards for Nursery Plants, published by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Plant Industry.

What If I can only replace a portion of the Tree Replacement Ratio on my property?

With the exception of Live Oaks over 26 inches DBH; where a partial Tree Replacement Ratio was reached the Inch Per Inch Tree Replacement Fee will be prorated by the same percentage of Tree Replacement Ratio reached.

Example: A 30 inch tree is removed. The property owner replants two (2 inch) protected trees or 50% of the Tree Replacement Ratio required. The owner will pay 50% of the Inch Per Inch Replacement Fee (\$80) per inch for the 26 inches not replaced. A total Tree Replacement Fee of (\$40 x 26 inches) \$1,040. If the owner does not replace any inches the fee would be (\$80 x 30 inches) or \$2,400.

Can the replacement fees be waived?

Yes, if one or more of the following conditions is found to exist:

Where a Protected Tree is Removed pursuant to criteria 1 or 2, a minimum two inch Protected Tree shall be planted on the property as a replacement tree and, if such replanting occurs in accordance with the requirements of this Section, the Inch Per Inch Replacement Fees shall be waived.

Tree Replacement Ratio and Tree Replacement Fee Information

DBH Tree Removed	Tree Replacement Ratio	Inch per Inch Tree Replacement Fee for Properties with Homestead Exemption for Ad Valorem Tax Purposes	Inch Per Inch Tree Replacement Fee for All Other Properties
4" to less than 10"	1:1	\$10.00	\$20.00
10" to less than 20"	2:1	\$20.00	\$40.00
20" to less than 30"	3:1	\$30.00	\$60.00
30" to less than 40"	4:1	\$40.00	\$80.00
40" and greater	5:1	\$50.00	\$100.00