



# Tree Removal Information and Checklist

**TREE REMOVAL INFORMATION.** Much of Arcata is forested with stands of conifers, most notably redwoods, which are a distinctive part of the City character, and protected by City code. However, when trees pose a hazard or are located in areas of planned growth they may need to be removed.

**Ministerial Tree Removal.** Permit approval may be ministerial, meaning it can be approved without a public hearing by Administrative Action. In general, the permit is considered ministerial if it applies only to the removal of 4 or fewer trees within a 10-year period, in an area of less than 3 acres.

**Discretionary Tree Removal.** All other tree removals require a discretionary permit approved by the Zoning Administrator, with a public hearing.

The City requires a permit prior to removal of certain sizes and numbers of trees in order to review compliance with the Arcata Land Use Code. This preserves and protects trees considered important to the character of the City of Arcata and its neighborhoods, while allowing trees which pose danger, are diseased, or limit growth to be removed. A permit is required in all City zones, except for commercial timber operations as allowed within the AE, AR, and NR-TP zone districts.

A Tree Removal Permit must be obtained prior to the removal, relocation, cutting down, topping, or other acts that cause destruction of any tree with a diameter of 16-inches or more, or a group of 30 or more trees with diameters more than 10-inches, unless specifically exempted by Land Use Code [Chapter 9.58.040](#). Diameter measurements are made at 54-inches above natural grade. Removal of trees outside the parameters noted above does not require a permit.

A Tree Removal Permit is also required with approval of discretionary projects if any tree removal is involved (such as Hillside Development, Grading, Coastal Development, Use Permit, etc.).

**The Process.** After submission of a Tree Removal Application and Deposit, a Planner will review the project. For all tree removals, there is an inspection made by Environmental Services staff to determine the presence of nesting birds, or other environmental issues which may need to be mitigated.

A hearing is scheduled and noticed for discretionary permits, with the Zoning Administrator as approval authority. No hearing is required for ministerial permits.

**Work in Right-of-Way:** Note that if equipment or work will be in the public right-of-way, an Encroachment Permit is required. These are issued through the City's Engineering Department.

**Permit Expiration.** The presence of nesting birds will determine the window for tree removal. If the window is missed, the permittee must certify that there are no nesting birds. Work must begin within six months from the date of approval. Time extensions up to two years may be granted upon request.



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## CHECKLIST

### For Ministerial and Discretionary Permits:

- Application form and Deposit

### For Ministerial Permits:

- Site Plan showing:
  - Type, size, and location of trees to be topped or removed
  - Location of any buildings or roads on site
  - Topography if there are slopes over 15%
- Photos showing the location of the tree(s)
- Description of plan to remove trees (include removal service if one is used)

### For Discretionary Permits:

- Plan of operation with hours of operation, method of debris disposal, haul route, and erosion control methods (Best Management Practices), including the contact person available during the hours of operation.
- A statement indicating whether the project involves the clearing of vegetation around a house to establish defensible space as identified in California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) Fire Safe Guidelines, and whether a CDF permit is required.
- A report by an Arborist or Registered Professional Forester may be required by the Community Development Director or City Forester (check with a Planner) – the report must include:
  - Location and type of tree protection measures to be installed for retained trees.
  - Aerial photographs of the project site.
  - Utility trenching pathway plan (if applicable).
- A check for \$150 payable to the City of Arcata for a Cultural Resource Review from North Coastal Information Center (NCIC)

### CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act)

- For projects not exempt from CEQA, submit a CEQA checklist – see planning staff for more information