

July, 2013  
BUILDING DIVISION

# TREE CUTTING PERMIT APPLICATION PROCESS

Tree Protection Bylaw, 2006 No. 16100

The bylaw is available in its entirety at the City of Surrey website at  
[www.surrey.ca/treeprotection](http://www.surrey.ca/treeprotection) .

## General Procedures

Residents removing trees from their property must be in possession of a Tree Cutting Permit (TCP) from the City of Surrey before the actual tree removal. An application can be obtained from the Planning and Development Department at Surrey City Hall, 14245 – 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue or online at [www.surrey.ca/treeprotection](http://www.surrey.ca/treeprotection) .

## Application Requirements

- Site address
- Address, name and signature of applicant
- Phone number and email address
- Name and signature of registered owner, if not the applicant
- Number of trees to remove and reason for tree removal(s)
- Aerial photo of the property with the location of the tree circled (can be provided by City Hall staff)
- For sites with a demolition, building, development or development variance permit or subdivision application, a legal survey and report with the information required as listed on the City Bulletins: *Tree Survey Guidelines* and *Arborist Report Specifications*.

Possible additional requirements:

- Documents supporting the tree removal request (arborist report, site plan, planting plan, photos)
- For shared trees (trees that straddle a property boundary), written authorization from the neighbours who share ownership
- Any other documentation deemed necessary by the City
- For applications from strata councils, management companies etc. a letter, with contact information, stating the applicant is authorized to apply for a permit on behalf of the strata

### **Hazardous Tree Cutting Permit Application**

In addition to the above requirements, to issue a tree cutting permit for a **hazard tree** (by bylaw definition), which does not require payment of a fee or the replanting of replacement trees, the City requires:

- For a tree which requires removal on an emergency basis because it has been severely damaged by natural causes and poses an imminent danger of falling and injuring or damaging persons or property:
  - if a permit cannot be obtained prior to the tree falling, the owner may cut the tree or have it cut, but must report it to City Hall within 24 hours. The tree debris cannot be removed until City Staff have visited the site and confirmed the situation.
- For a tree which requires removal because it has been damaged by natural causes and poses a danger of falling and injuring or damaging persons or property:
  - photos of the tree showing the tree in relation to buildings, a close-up of the entire tree and as many photos as needed to show the condition of concern (for example, a tree showing a lean due to recent storm activity, major limb breakage, etc.).

### **Agricultural Land Tree Cutting Permit Application**

If the tree removal is required for agricultural purposes, for properties zoned to permit agricultural use, under Zoning Bylaw 12000, a tree cutting permit, fees and replacement planting (perimeter planting, *if* required) is necessary for tree removal. Further details on tree permits on agricultural land can be found in City Bulletin: *Tree Removal on Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) or Land Zoned for Agricultural Use*.

### **Bird's Nests and Tree Cutting**

Issuance of a permit does not exempt the property owner from compliance with any Provincial or Federal Government statutes or regulations that may apply to a property. This includes, but is not limited to, the Migratory Birds Convention Act and the BC Wildlife Act. If there are nests present, tree cutting and land clearing may not occur between April 1 to July 31. For eagle's nests, nests cannot be removed at any time and tree removal in the *vicinity* of an active nest is strictly prohibited, February 1 to September 31.

### **Tree Pruning**

Tree pruning must not negatively affect the health, balance and shape of the tree and must follow the standards and Best Management Practices used by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA): ANSI-300, Part 1-2001 and BMP – Tree Pruning-2002.

A tree cutting permit *is required* to carry out professional tree pruning for **Significant Trees** and requires that a report by a certified arborist which documents that pruning is necessary be submitted and approved by the City and that the pruning work be done by a certified arborist according to the professional standards of the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA).

A tree cutting permit is *not required* to prune a **protected tree**, but must be done by a certified arborist, as stated above. In addition, trees cannot:

- be topped, where the tree has not been topped previously;
- be lift pruned, where the lower branches of the live crown (green branches) of the tree are removed to reduced the live crown to less than 50% of the total tree height; and
- have more than 25% of the live crown of a tree removed in any 12-month period.

### **Application Process**

Once an application has been submitted, typically a site inspection is conducted at the project address. Field data, such as confirmation of tree ownership, reason for removal, tree species and diameter, are collected. If approved, applicants are contacted when the permit is ready for pick-up or for additional information. Pick-up of the tree cutting permit requires payment of the permit fee and replacement tree planting security. Two copies of the permit are provided, one for the applicant's files, and one to be weather-proofed and posted in a visible location on-site, a minimum of 24 hours before tree removal occurs, remaining until the work is completed.

### **Questions**

If you have questions or require further information please refer first to the bylaw or to the bylaw-related bulletins which can be obtained at City Hall or on the City website at [www.surrey.ca/treeprotection](http://www.surrey.ca/treeprotection)

For additional clarification of these materials please email [TreeBylaw@surrey.ca](mailto:TreeBylaw@surrey.ca) or you can phone 604-591-4675.