

Bulletin: Tree Cutting Permits



Created: Sept. 23, 2022

When do I need a Tree Cutting Permit?

If a tree on private property is near water (e.g. creeks, ponds, wetlands or lakes) or on a slope steeper than 30%, these trees are considered protected under Bylaw No. 8041 and a tree cutting permit is required.

Permit applications will only be considered if the tree is considered hazardous by a certified arborist. The hazard posed must be clearly identified based on their professional expertise. Damage to property (including damage to roofs, retaining walls and sidewalks) that pruning cannot rectify may also qualify.

Why do I need a permit?

Permits are required because trees provide essential services – shade and cooling, noise buffering, slope/streambank stabilization, and wildlife habitat – just like other infrastructure, such as fire hydrants and street lights.

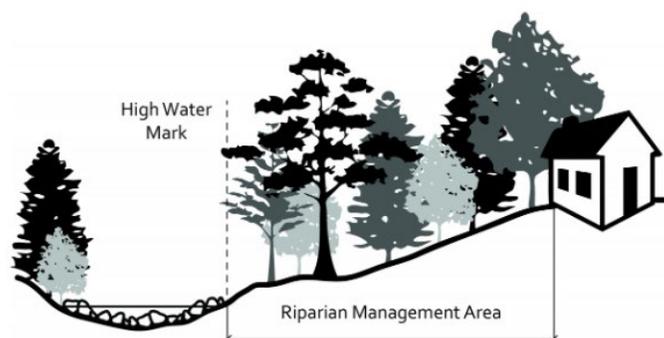
Permits ensure a qualified professional arborist is assessing trees in these important locations. Arborists help determine:

- Is removal necessary? Or can pruning achieve the best outcome?
- Safe removal practices, without damaging land, structures or other plants.
- The right replacement tree species in the right planting location.

Where are protected trees found?

Trees generally cannot be removed, without permit, on slopes exceeding 30% or within 15 meters of a water body. Sometimes this area is bigger (30m) or smaller (10m).

The Official Community Plan identifies these as the [Natural Environment Development Permit Area](#).



This information is summarized for convenience. Please refer to the applicable bylaw for the complete regulation.

Questions?
Send an email to:
planninginfo@kelowna.ca

Development Planning
City Hall – 2nd Floor
1435 Water Street
Kelowna, BC V1Y 1J4
TEL 250-469-8626

Unsure if this bylaw applies to the tree of concern? Call us at **250-469-8626**

How Do I Apply?

This bulletin summarizes the requirements of:

*- Bylaw No. 8041
- 2040 Official
Community Plan*

These bylaws can be viewed online at kelowna.ca

Applications must be submitted with the application fee (\$50) at City Hall. Applications should include the application form, which includes space for your arborist to provide their hazard tree assessment and replacement tree recommendations.

If the replacement trees cannot be immediately planted, a security deposit must be provided with the application. The security will be equivalent to 125% of the cost of the replacement trees and labour.

Exemptions

This bylaw is based on the requirements to protect water and adjacent land, set by the Province of B.C., which discourage the removal or mowing of any plants near water, recognizing the importance of maintaining our natural assets with some exemptions:

1. Pruning is allowed to address safety or prevent property damage. However, it cannot result in damage to the tree. Pruning should impact less than 30% of the canopy and follow standard arboricultural practices. If a protected tree is damaged, replacements are required.
2. Wildfire management pruning – limbs/branches within 2 m of the ground may be pruned. Tree removals must still be permitted but are often unnecessary if FireSmart practices like lower limb pruning and ground clean up are performed.
3. Fruit trees, invasives species, and trees grown for commercial farm operations are exempt from this bylaw.

Replacement Requirements

As we live in a hot and dry climate, new trees are difficult to establish and grow. As such, a minimum of two (2) trees are typically required to replace each removed tree.

More trees are required to replace larger trees, recognizing the significant lost services provided by mature trees. If the trunk can be retained for wildlife habitat, the replacement requirement may be lowered to 1 replacement tree per retained trunk.

At least one replacement tree should be a similar species to the one removed – conifer for conifer or deciduous for deciduous. Replacement deciduous trees must be at least 60mm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH). Replacement conifers must be at least 2 metres tall.

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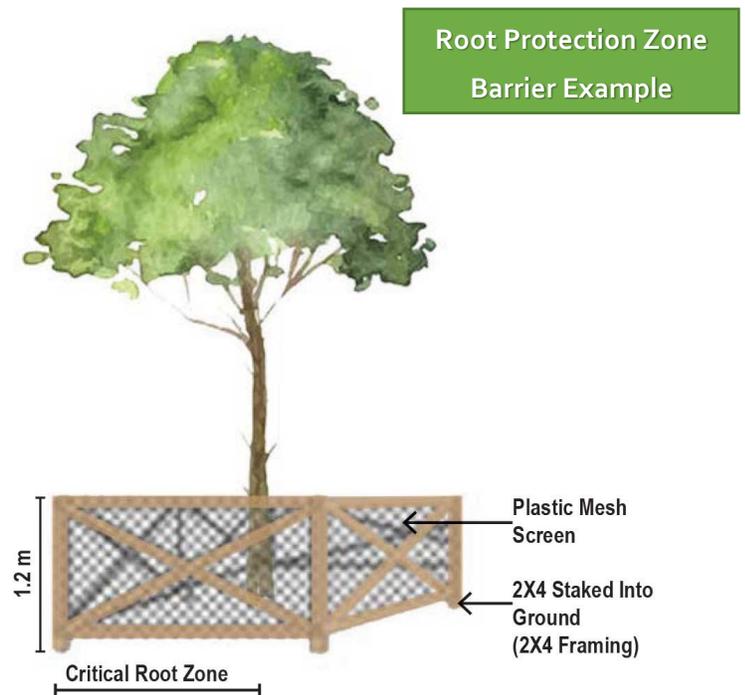
Maintenance Requirements

Watering bags or equivalent irrigation are needed to support replacement tree(s) for at least three (3) years after planting.

If deemed a high risk of failure, the Security Deposit may be held for one year after planting to encourage on-going irrigation or cover the cost of a second replacement if the tree is abandoned.

Tree Care Tips

- Do not pile soil/fill, lumber or building materials in the area directly below branches. Install a root protection zone barrier (under guidance of an arborist) to ensure retained trees are not damaged.
- Avoid planting from June - August.
- Do not place sod/turf over root zone.
- Use watering bags for the 1st three years – after that most native tree species need little to no additional irrigation.
- Do not damage the trunk by mounding mulch against it or using a string trimmer.



- For tips on 'How to Plant a Tree', see the instructional video at the bottom of this webpage: [NeighbourWoods | City of Kelowna](#)



Good Mulching

- No mulch within 5 cm of the trunk
- Thicker mulch layer near tips of branches



Poor Mulching

- Avoid mulch mounded around the trunk