

Regarding Tree Concerns within the District of West Vancouver

Important Notice

Due to budget and staffing constraints, the District does not have a regular inspection routine for all public trees within the Municipality. Upon notification, an Environmental Protection Officer and/or District Arborist will inspect trees on District property and address hazards to the public or property.

See: [Trees | District of West Vancouver](#)
[FireSmart Community | District of West Vancouver](#)

What to Know

- Trees are protected on private property, municipal property, public lands (parks and trails), and environmentally sensitive and covenanted areas.
- **Private Property.** A *Private Property Tree Cutting Permit Application* must be completed to obtain a permit to cut Protected Trees on private property.
- Protected Trees on private property that require a permit to cut include: any species 75 cm in diameter or larger, Arbutus, Garry oak, Pacific yew, Pacific dogwood, Yellow cedar, and Shore pine 20 cm in diameter or larger. Trees 10 cm in diameter or larger that are located within 15 m of the top of a watercourse bank and/or within 15 m of the high-tide mark of the ocean. Heritage trees are also Protected Trees.
- The District does not manage trees on private property.
- The Good Neighbour Bylaw does not address tree issues on private property and can not be invoked to settle inter-neighbour tree concerns. Neighbours should speak with each other to address their concerns.
- If branches are overhanging from a neighbour's tree, residents can hire a contractor to trim overhanging branches back to the property line. The contractor should ensure the work done meets arboriculture industry standards and will not negatively impact the long-term health of the tree(s). Permits may be required for pruning.
- If a dead tree or a stand of dead trees is on a neighbouring property, neighbours should speak to each other to address their concerns. Permits may be required for tree work.
- Trees on private property that impact residential service drops are the responsibility of the landowner. Residents can hire a contractor to trim or remove the tree. Permits may be required.
- An *Environmental Development Permit* is required for any removal or pruning work on trees 10 cm in diameter or larger that are located within 15 m of the top of a watercourse bank (Watercourse Protection Area).
- A *Foreshore Development Permit* is required for any removal or pruning work on trees 10 cm in diameter or larger that are located within 15 m of the natural boundary (high tide mark) of the ocean (Foreshore Protection Area).
- **Municipal Property Tree Work - Non-Hazardous Trees.** A *Municipal Property Tree Cutting Permit Application* must be completed by residents to obtain a permit before any tree work can be done on boulevards and other non-park, municipal lands.
- A minimum of 80% of your neighbours may need to approve the work before you can submit your application. Based on the impact of the proposed tree work, neighbours within a varying distance should be



WEST VANCOUVER FIRE & RESCUE

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contacted.

- On Municipal Property, the permit fees, associated with the cost of tree work and the cost of restitution will be the responsibility of the applicant.
- **Municipal Property Tree Work – Hazard Trees**
- The District only removes trees and limbs deemed to be hazardous and does not prune or remove a tree for nuisance issues, view creation, or potential fire risk.
- Upon notification, an Environmental Protection Officer and/or District Arborist will inspect trees on District property and address hazards to the public or property.
- This applies to trees on District property, dedicated roads, parks, or publicly owned land.
- If trees are deemed to be hazardous the hazard will be mitigated at District expense as soon as practical and with limited consultation.
- An inspection process will generate a tree rating priority based on condition and urgency. The ratings are Priorities 1, 2 or 3.
- Priority 1 will require immediate mitigation by a contractor.
- Priority 2 shall be dealt with as soon as practical within work schedule limits.
- Priority 3 will be documented for monitoring and mitigation and addressed at a future time when work is required.
- **Public Land:** A *Public Lands Tree tree-cutting permit* is required before any tree work can be done on public land or parks.
- A minimum of 80% of your neighbours need to approve the work before you can submit your

application.

- On Public Lands, the applicant will be responsible for the permit fees, associated cost of tree work, and restitution.
- **Fire Risk Related Tree Removal Requests - Public Land**
- Due to drought and hemlock looper moths, there are a considerable number of dead hemlock and cedar trees across the District.
- A hazardous tree is a tree that has a probable likelihood of failure, where the failed part is likely to hit a target. A standing dead tree or group of standing dead trees may not be deemed a hazard.
- Non-hazardous dead trees and stands of non-hazardous dead trees will not be removed at the expense of the District.
- Residents can apply to prune or remove trees, including groups of dead trees on District-owned lands and parks, excluding boulevards at their own expense, using a District-approved contractor.
- The perception that dead trees pose a 'potential fire risk' is a common belief. However, studies have shown that tree die-offs do not increase wildfire risk. Weather is the predominant factor driving wildfire hazards.
- The District encourages that FireSmart Principals be applied to your property and surrounding area, including regular clean-up of accumulated fallen branches, dry grass, and needles from your property to eliminate potential surface fuels. Pruning of branches on evergreen trees is encouraged on your property to a height of 2 metres from the ground within 30 metres of your home. District permit requirements will be required to be followed.



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