



Tree Trimming and Removal

If you plan on getting those trees trimmed before the peak of hurricane season, now is the time to do it. Property owners, take note:

- Removing a tree entirely requires a permit from the Town. No permit fee is charged if the trees are already dead or if they have caused damage or are likely to cause damage to existing buildings and structures.
- Trimming tree branches does not require a permit, if the trimming is not excessive to the point that it causes the tree to die.
- If done by a contractor, the contractor must remove the limbs from the property.
- If placed by the roadside for pickup, the trimmings cannot be greater than three feet in length and weigh no more than 40 pounds. Trimmings and debris piles cannot block the sidewalk or street.
- When a large debris pile is created, the property owner must contact Waste Pro at (386) 788-8890 to arrange for a special pickup.

Solicitors

If you are approached by a tree removal business at your home, please know that ALL door-to-door solicitors are required to have a solicitation permit and undergo background checks before they can make unannounced house calls. Solicitors are required to carry the original permit on their person at all times while soliciting. Hours are limited to between 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday; no soliciting is allowed on Sunday. Any person found engaging in these activities without a permit or soliciting in an aggressive manner may be subject to fines or penalties or having their permit revoked. If you have any concerns about solicitors in your neighborhood, please contact the Police Department nonemergency line at (386) 236-2160.

Arborist documentation required for tree removal permit exemption

Some tree removal companies may tell you that you do not need a tree removal permit from the Town if you get a letter from an arborist. Understand that this is true only in limited circumstances! Per [Florida Statutes Ch. 163.045](#), property owners are only exempt from local tree removal permits and tree replacement requirements if the following conditions are met:

1. The property in question is a detached **single-family** residential lot.

2. The tree is assessed by an arborist **certified** by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) or by a **Florida-licensed** landscape architect.
3. The arborist or landscape architect conducts the assessment of the tree **onsite**. According to the ISA, this is called a **Level 2 Basic Tree Risk Assessment**, and involves, "...looking at the tree's roots, trunk, and crown to detect structural defects. It is a 360-degree, ground-based visual observation of the tree. Arborists walk completely around a tree and look for defects in all visible areas of a tree, including the surrounding area." It is not enough for the arborist to simply drive by the tree, look at photographs of the tree, or view it remotely with a mobile device.
4. The assessment must be performed according to the *Best Management Practices - Tree Risk Assessment*, Second Edition (2017).
5. The tree must pose an **unacceptable** risk to persons or property, such that removal of the tree is the only option available. If simply trimming the tree removes the risk, then that option must be taken.
6. The assessment letter must be **signed** by the Arborist.

Unless **all** of these conditions are met, a tree removal permit is required from the Town, and the tree(s) may have to be replaced. Trees removed without a permit must be replaced within 90 days. The number and size of replacement trees required must equal 100 percent of the total diameter of the tree(s) removed. For example, a 10-inch diameter tree unlawfully removed would need to be replaced with four 2.5-inch diameter trees.

Note that the Town already waives permit application fees for trees that are dead or pose a risk to property. All that is needed with the permit application is a survey of the property with the location of the tree drawn on it, along with photos or other documentation demonstrating the risk posed by the tree.

It is always a good idea to check with the Town's Planning & Development Department staff before doing any work to your home or property, to verify whether a permit is needed. Department staff are ready and available to answer your questions about code requirements, application forms, and inspection procedures. Please contact Patty Rippey, Senior Planner with any questions at (386-236-2172).