



critical
aquifer
recharge
areas

fish &
wildlife
habitat
areas

frequently
flooded
areas

geologically
hazardous
areas

wetlands

2018 Critical Areas Ordinance Resource Sheet

Tree & Vegetation Activities – Hazard Tree Removal

Hazard tree removal requires a minor critical area permit.

You must submit a minor critical area permit application and other supporting materials to request approval to remove a hazardous tree within critical areas, including:

- Wetlands, streams, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas and their buffers
- Landslide hazard areas (steep slopes) and their setbacks

Hazard tree removal within an Aquifer Recharge Protection Area (ARPA) does not require a minor critical area permit.

Hazard tree removal in an ARPA is allowed in accordance with BIMC 16.18.040, Land Clearing. Up to 6 significant trees may be removed without a permit.

Important Note:

Hazard tree removal within critical areas must be performed by a licensed contractor, forester, or certified arborist in the State of Washington who has submitted a signed "Statement of Tree and Vegetation Standards and Requirements Acknowledgment Form."

A minor critical area permit will not be approved if the person or company performing the work has not submitted a signed form to the City prior to start of work.

What supporting materials are required?

- ✓ A brief report from an International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Tree Risk Assessment Qualified (TRAQ) arborist that documents the hazard and target, including information on the overall health of the tree, tissue sample analyses, if necessary, analysis of potential targets, the location and dimensions of the tree, and photos of the tree and targets.
- ✓ A replanting plan.
- ✓ A letter by a geotechnical engineer, if applicable.

The landslide hazard area (steep slope) setback for hazard tree removal is 25 feet.

When do I need a letter from a geotechnical engineer?

Removal of one hazard tree does not require a letter from a geotechnical engineer. If more than one hazard tree, or more than two within a five-year period, are to be removed within a landslide hazard area or within 25 feet from the top of slope, a letter by a geotechnical engineer documenting that the work complies with development standards for landslide hazard areas.

May I remove a hazardous tree if it is an emergency?

Yes. Hazard trees determined to pose an imminent threat or danger may be removed or pruned prior to receiving approval from the City; provided, that within 14 days, the land owner submits the report required submittal materials.

Questions: pcd@bainbridgewa.gov or 206.780.3770

You may also visit us in person at the Department of Planning and Community Development between 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, Monday, Tuesday and Friday and 8:00 am – noon, Wednesday and Thursday.

City of Bainbridge Island
280 Madison Avenue N
Bainbridge Island, WA
www.bainbridgewa.gov

Tree & Vegetation Activities – Hazard Tree Removal

What are the replanting plan requirements?

- Any trees that are removed must be replaced with new trees at a minimum ratio of two replacement trees for each tree removed (2:1).
- Replanting must occur within the first appropriate growing season.
- Replacement trees may be planted at a nearby location.
- Replacement trees shall be:
 - Species that are native and indigenous to the site.
 - A minimum size of six feet in height measured from top of root flare, with a minimum trunk diameter of one inch measured at four inches above top of root flare for both evergreen and deciduous trees.
- Smaller replacement trees are acceptable, at a minimum ratio of three replacement trees for each tree removed (3:1) and a minimum size of three feet (36 inches) in height measured from top of root flare.
- The replanting plan may be completed by an ISA-certified arborist or landscape architect.

How do I submit a minor critical area permit?

Minor critical area permits may be submitted at the Department of Planning and Community Development at any time during regular business hours. No intake appointment or fee is required. Submittal requirements include:

- ✓ The City's Master Land Use Application (check Critical Area Permit, Minor)
- ✓ Applicable supporting materials
- ✓ **Verification that the person or company performing the work has submitted an acknowledgement form**
- ✓ Owner/agent agreement if anyone other than the landowner is applying for the permit

Many minor critical area permits can be reviewed and approved when you come in to apply. Some may require additional analysis or a site visit and may take one to two weeks to review.

Important Notes:

Seasonal limitations

No vegetation removal, unless required to conduct a risk inspection by a certified arborist, is allowed in erosion and landslide hazard areas and their setbacks at the top of the slope between October 1 and April 1 unless (i) a waiver is granted by the director or (ii) it is required due to an emergency involving immediate danger to life or property.

Wildlife Habitat

Dead and deteriorating trees often provide valuable habitat for wildlife. Landowners are encouraged, but not required, to retain all or portions of removed hazard trees on site to provide wildlife habitat. If you are converting a hazard tree to a wildlife snag, you still need to get prior approval. If a tree to be removed provides critical habitat, such as an eagle perch, a qualified wildlife biologist shall be consulted to determine timing and methods of removal that will minimize impacts.

Targets

The City will not approve the removal of trees if there is no target that would be impacted if the tree falls or breaks.

Finding an Arborist

You can find an ISA-certified arborist or TRAC qualified arborist through the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) website at: <https://pnwisa.org/hire-an-arborist/isa-certified-arborist-directory/>. Before you hire an arborist, please make sure they are certified by the ISA and have the required qualifications.