

Guide for Tree Removal Within a Development Permit Area

Prior to removing any tree or natural vegetation within the City of Langford, property owners are required to determine whether any portion of their property is within one of the following Development Permit (DP) Areas:

- 200-year Floodplain
- Steep Slopes
- Interface Fire Hazard
- Areas of Drainage Concern
- Riparian Areas
- Sensitive Ecosystems (i.e., wetlands, older forest, terrestrial herbaceous, woodland)
- Areas with Potential Habitat and Biodiversity Values

Please check the City's [property information map](#) to determine if your property is within one of the specified DP areas.

For trees located within a DP Area, a **dead or hazardous** tree may be removed or trimmed only in accordance with a recommendation from a qualified professional, such as a certified arborist or Registered Professional Biologist. Upon the submission of the letter of recommendation from the appropriate environmental professional, City staff will review the letter and, if acceptable, draft a Development Permit Exemption Letter.

The Exemption letter will include a replanting schedule that is either recommended by the arborist or biologist, or incorporated from the Tree Removal Compensation table list in the Development Permit Area Design Guidelines.

Prior to issuance of the Exemption Letter, a fee will be collected and bonding for the replanting will need to be paid. Bonding is returned upon proof of planting; this is done by providing picture evidence of receipts and in-situ plantings.

Any vegetation located outside of one of the City's DP areas that was not planted in accordance with a landscape plan or bylaw, may be removed without a permit.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I still remove a tree that is within a Development Permit Area?

Yes, provided that the owner first applies for and receives either a Development Permit or an Exemption Letter. Exemptions from a Development Permit may be offered when a tree is dead, diseased, and dying, or a hazard to human safety or property. In most cases, the City will require a report from a certified arborist before providing a letter of a specific exemption from the requirements of a Development Permit. In addition, the City may require a report prepared by a Registered Professional Biologist before issuing a Development Permit in areas of environmental sensitivity.

What is the process and timeline for obtaining an Exemption Letter?

It takes approximately 1-2 weeks to receive your Exemption Letter, depending on the complexity of the project. For any property within a Development Permit Area, please consult our [website](#) for a summary of the process for obtaining a Development Permit.

How much does it cost?

Please refer to the fee schedule on our [website](#) for a summary of fees.

Why does the City not have a tree protection Bylaw?

The City of Langford does not have a general tree cutting bylaw, which speaks to just the removal of trees, but opted instead to proceed down the path of designated Development Permit Areas, which prohibits lands from being altered without a study prepared by a qualified environmental professional, prior to issuance of a permit. These include, for example, areas of steep slopes, sensitive ecosystems, riparian areas around lakes and streams, and areas of high or extreme interface fire hazard.