



Frequently Asked Questions

1. Which trees are protected in Pinellas County?

a. According to the Pinellas County Land Development Code (PCLDC), all trees 4 inches in diameter at breast height (The diameter, in inches, of a tree measured at 4 ½ feet above the natural grade.) or greater are protected within upland areas; with the exception of: Punk tree, Brazilian pepper, and Chinese tallow. However, any trees within a wetland area are protected regardless of size.

2. Do I need a permit every time I want to remove a tree?

a. Yes, it is a Pinellas County requirement that an environmental permit be pulled whenever a tree is removed from a property.

3. Why do I have to plant a tree(s) when I didn't remove or request that any be removed; and how is the required number of tree replants for an individual lot calculated?

a. PCLDC requires one tree be planted per every 2,000 square feet of land. Therefore, based upon the lot's square footage a specific number of tree(s) will be required. The number of replants required for a lot after a tree(s) is removed will be contingent upon how many trees are already present, in conjunction with the lot size. Example:

Guidelines for Tree Replant Requirements	
Parcel size in square footage:	Number of Replants:
3,500-6,000	2
6,001-9,500	4
9,501-16,000	6
Over 16,000 (per 16,000 sq. ft. unity)	8+

4. Sometimes a tree is cut down or a development activity is conducted without a permit, creating a violation. Isn't it the tree service's or contractor's responsibility to obtain a habitat permit?

a. Although a tree service or contractor can apply for a permit, it is ultimately the responsibility of the home owner(s) to ensure that a permit has been issued for his/her property before any trees are removed or construction work is conducted.

5. If a tree is located within an utility easement that is technically on my property, will that tree count toward the total number of trees required for my lot?

a. Yes, for trees located in an utility easement on preexisting residential properties, the tree will count towards the lots overall tree requirement. For new commercial sites and newly proposed single family residence which require the approval of a site plan, the placement of trees in an utility easement is not permissible and will not count towards the lot's total required tree count.

6. Are there any species of tree that may not count towards my total lot requirement?

a. All required trees must come from the approved tree [species list](#).

7. If I am planting a large species of tree, where should I install it to prevent future structural damage?

a. It is generally advised that large trees be planted 20 feet away from any structure, to ensure the root system does not encroach on sidewalks, driveways, utilities, or the house itself. Medium species should be installed 15 feet away, and small species, 10 feet away.

8. Under what conditions can I request that a tree be removed?

a. A tree permit can be requested for any tree located on your property. However, it is the purview of this department to determine if the tree meet the criteria and can be removed.

9. As a riparian owner, am I allowed to trim the mangroves along my property line?

a. All mangrove involved activities are handled by water [navigation/public works](#).

10. If a tree located on the right-of-way is causing structural damage to my property, who do I call?

a. All trees on Public right-of-ways needs approval and permitting from Regulatory Services. They can be reached at 727-464-3670.

b. All private right of way request should be submitted to our department for review.

11. Is tree topping permitted in Pinellas County?

a. No, top pruning or other severe pruning or maintenance practices of required plant materials that results in stunted, abnormal, or other unreasonable deviation from their normal healthy growth shall be considered as the destruction of these materials and replacement shall be required as described in the PCLDC.

12. What is the minimum distance between a tree and any construction activity (building or demolishing a structure, scraping or pouring concrete, installing footers, grading, etc.) that necessitates a tree barricade being installed?

a. In general, any tree that is 4" in diameter DBH and within 20 feet of a construction zone, must be barricaded. However, specific requirements for all erosion control will be addressed on a case by case basis when applicants come into our office to propose a project.

13. What is the minimum radius of a tree to be protected by a barricade?

a. Hardwood tree barricades must encompass 2/3 of the canopy dripline or 6' from the base of the tree; whichever is larger.

b. Softwoods (Pines) must have a radius of 6' or the entirety of the dripline; whichever is larger.

14. Where is erosion control (silt screen, hay bales, inlet socks, etc.) required during construction?

a. These parameters will be determined situationally depending on the individual lot and type of construction occurring. In general, if a commercial project is adjacent to a residential property, a body of water (including inlets that may drain into a municipal sewer or privately owned water bodies), or conservation easement, then erosion control will be required to ensure no sediment or construction debris is tracked off site.