



TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS TREE TRIMMING AND TREE REMOVAL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is an inspection required to remove a tree?

Before removing a tree always ask for an inspection. The inspection is done at no charge and the inspector will determine if the tree may be removed and if a permit is necessary. In some cases, the inspector may suggest selective trimming or another alternative to complete removal of the tree.

When may a tree be removed?

On developed residential lots a tree may be removed for one of several reasons including:

- The tree has a hazardous branching structure or has a hollow trunk.
- The tree is injured or diseased beyond repair.
- The tree is impacting the foundation of a house or other building or structure.
- There are no viable alternatives to locating a structure or a driveway on the lot.
- The tree is posing a threat to traffic visibility.
- The tree is negatively impacting a more desirable tree.

Reasons such as having to rake leaves or getting leaves in swimming pools are not sufficient reasons to approve a tree removal.

Is a permit required?

In most cases a permit will be required to remove a tree, but there are some exceptions to the permit requirement. The inspector will determine if a permit is required during inspection. If the homeowner is using a tree service, the tree service should obtain the permit. Having the tree service obtain the permit will help verify if the contractor is properly licensed and insured. This process is an added protection for the homeowner.

Will the Town haul away the tree?

The Town will not haul away trees as a routine trash collection activity. If a contractor is used, the contractor is required to remove the tree, and the removal should be part of any agreement with a tree contractor. The Town's waste collector will pick up trimming done by the homeowner, and the homeowner may make arrangements for a special, for fee, pick-up for larger quantities of tree debris.

Will I have to replace a tree?

If a permit is obtained prior to removing a tree, the only time a replacement tree is required is when the lot has fewer than three remaining trees. The code requires each residential lot to have at least three trees. A replacement tree is required to be at least 3-inches DBH and have a crown spread of 10-feet.

If a tree is removed without a permit or prior inspection, replacement trees will be required according to a schedule specified in the code. Replacement trees must be chosen from the list of canopy trees stated in the Town code.

Can I trim a tree without a permit?

Yes, but trimming is limited to healthy pruning of the tree that supports tree growth and protects the integrity of the tree. Extensive trimming such as hat racking, which damages the basic structure of the tree (see photo) is prohibited and will require replacement of the damaged trees.

What if the inspector says no?

The property owner may present additional information about the tree such a report from a qualified arborist to help the inspector with his evaluation of the tree's health. The inspector may also request the homeowner provide additional data if the inspector cannot make a final decision. Any additional information will be considered by the inspector in making his final determination on removal.

The homeowner may also appeal the inspector's decision to the Town Council. An written appeal must be filed within 60 days of the inspection decision, and must demonstrate how the tree qualifies under the criteria for removal listed above.