

Do I Need a Permit to Remove My Tree?

A tree removal permit is required to remove any tree that is 12 inches or greater in circumference (measured at 4.5 feet above the ground).

A tree removal permit is also required prior to any grading, paving, or other ground-disturbing activity within the protected zone of a tree.

Removal or damage to a tree without an approved permit is unlawful and can result in tree replacement, fines and penalties (Cotati Municipal Code 17.54.080).

City of Cotati
Community Development

201 West Sierra Avenue
Cotati, CA 94931
(707) 665-3636
cotaticity.gov

Tree Removal On Your Property



Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*)



The Hub of Sonoma
County

Criteria to Remove a Tree

One or more of the following criteria must be met before a tree removal permit will be granted:

- The tree is an imminent hazard to life or property, and removing it is the only feasible way to eliminate the hazard.
- The tree is dead, dying or damaged beyond reclamation.
- The tree's roots are causing severe damage to public or private property, and removing the tree is the only feasible way to eliminate further damage.
- The tree is causing an undue hardship on the property owner. Normal routine maintenance does not constitute a hardship.
- Removing the tree promotes good arboricultural practice.
- The tree is an undesirable species that exhibits characteristics such as extreme flammability, poor structure, invasive roots, a relatively short life-span, and/or is generally considered to be a non-native invasive species.
- The removal is related to a city-approved construction project.
- Note that removal of a native (Black, Live, or Valley) Oak tree may only be authorized by the City Council .

Required Application Materials

The following items must be submitted with each Tree Removal Permit Application:

- Completed application form.
- Application fee (see [Cotati's Master Fee Schedule](#)).
- If applicable, the application shall include a letter from the homeowners' association authorizing the tree removal.
- Photos of tree(s) to be removed (aerial photo from Google Maps or similar software and photograph of tree itself).
- If required, an arborist's report prepared by an International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist. ISA Certified Arborists will typically state this qualification on their website or marketing materials. Individual certified arborists may be found on the ISA website at www.isa-arbor.com/.
- Proof of damage caused by tree(s) such as photographs of damaged property or paid invoices for repairs, if applicable.

Application Process

- To initiate a tree removal request, application materials and fees must be submitted to the Community Development Department.
- City staff will visit the property and assess the condition of the tree(s) and surrounding improvements.
- A decision to approve or deny the tree

removal, or a request for additional information (such as an arborist's report), will be provided to the applicant shortly after the site visit.

- If it is determined that the tree can be removed, the City will post a tree removal permit on the property and provide a written approval letter to the applicant together with any replacement requirements.
- Unless there is an imminent threat to persons or property, the property will be posted for a minimum of 10 days. This is the period in which a person can appeal the decision to authorize removal. If an appeal is not filed, the tree may be removed on or after the date listed on the permit.
- Work authorized by a tree permit must commence within six (6) months from the date of approval or the approval will expire. Time extensions may be granted after written request.
- Planting replacement trees on-site or payment of an in-lieu fee is required with any tree removal permit. The number and type of trees required for mitigation is specified in the Tree Ordinance. The in-lieu fee is identified in the City's [Master Fee Schedule](#).
- Replacement tree(s), if required, shall be planted within 60 days of the removal.
- Removal of a tree 50 feet or more in height is not permitted between April 15 and June 15, for bird habitat protection.
- An encroachment permit will be required if the tree removal impacts traffic. Encroachment permit applications are available at www.cotaticity.gov.