

Trees in the City of Livermore Frequently Asked Questions

PRIVATE TREES

Do I need a Tree Removal Permit to remove a tree on my property?

Yes. If the tree falls into parameters established by the City of Livermore Tree Preservation Ordinance Section 12.20.130-12.20.311 adopted November 21, 2007.

12.20.160 Definitions

“Protected Tree” means a single-trunk tree, a multi-trunk tree, or a stand of multiple trees dependent upon each other for survival and meets any one or more of the following criteria:

1. Any tree located on private property occupied by single family residential development that meets the following criteria:
 - a) Any tree with a circumference at breast height (CBH) of 60 inches or more; or
 - b) Any California Native tree having a circumference at breast height (CBH) of 24 inches or more.
2. Any tree located on private property occupied by commercial, industrial, institutional (i.e., religious, public agency, hospital, care facilities, etc.), mixed-use or multi-family residential (two or more units) development with a circumference (CBH) of 24 inches or more; or
3. Any tree located on an undeveloped or underdeveloped property, regardless of zoning district, use, or development status, for which new development is proposed, with a circumference (CBH) of 18 inches or more; or
4. Any tree located in an open space, riparian or habitat area with a circumference (CBH) of 18 inches or more; or

Any tree approved as part of a site plan approval, or required as a condition of approval for a development project, zoning use permit, use permit or other site development review; or
5. Any tree designated by the City Council as determined to be an ancestral tree and/or
6. Any tree listed on the City’s Ancestral Tree Inventory; or
7. Any “California Native” protected trees.

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List of “California Native” Protected Trees

1. Alder, White (*Alnus rhombifolia*)
2. Bay, California (*Umbellularia californica*)
3. Buckeye, California (*Aesculus californica*)
4. Madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*)
5. Maple, Big Leaf (*Acer macrophyllum*)
6. Oak, Blue (*Quercus douglasii*)
7. Oak, California Black (*Quercus kelloggii*)
8. Oak, Canyon Live (*Quercus chrysolepis*)
9. Oak, Coast Live (*Quercus agrifolia*)
10. Oak, Interior Live (*Quercus wislizenii*)
11. Oak, Scrub (*Quercus berberidifolia*)
12. Oak, Valley (*Quercus lobata*)
13. Grey Pine (*Pinus sabiniana*)
14. Sycamore, California (*Platanus racemosa*)
15. Walnut, California Black (*Juglans hindsii californica*)

What is the process to obtain a Tree Removal Permit?

- Go to the City of Livermore’s website under Public Works/Landscape Maintenance: <http://www.ci.livermore.ca.us/maintenance/landscape.html>, or
- Call the Maintenance Division of Public Works at (925) 960-8020

Most reputable tree trimming companies employ Certified Arborists. They will be able to provide the various measurements and other analysis which is needed for City staff to review the application.

The following must be attached to the Tree Removal Permit Application:

- Site Map showing the relation of the tree or trees on the property.
- Pictures of tree or trees in question

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Note: The important measurements can be taken with a tape measure by wrapping the tape around the complete trunk of the tree. This should be done at chest height from the ground (approximately four feet from the ground).

Do I need a permit to prune one of the protected trees on my property?

No. But it should be pruned so that the health, balance and shape of the tree are not negatively altered. The International Society of Arboriculture has established standards and guidelines for proper pruning practices.

It is expected that minor property repairs and modifications to fences, sidewalks and driveways will be undertaken to reasonably accommodate the growing trunk, roots and crown of a protected tree.

Would someone from the City come out and take a look at my sick tree?

Unfortunately, the City does not perform on-call service to individual private property owners for services that can be obtained by landscape or tree service professionals. We suggest you contact the Canopy website at <http://www.canopy.org/trees.html> for professional referrals and general information, or the yellow pages for one of the local Certified Arborists at <http://www.isa-arbor.com>

NEIGHBORING TREES

My neighbor has a tree that overhangs my yard. What can I do about this?

The best thing to do is to talk to your neighbor and try to come to a mutual resolution as to what action should be taken. Trimming branches you deem necessary on your side of the property line is generally allowable, providing that you do not damage the tree or create a safety hazard. A Certified Arborist can provide you and your neighbor with information and answer questions that you may have about what branches can be removed from the tree.

There is a tree growing on our property line with the neighbor. Whose tree is it, and who is responsible for that tree if it causes problems?

You are both the proud owners of the tree. Whether it started as a young tree on yours or your neighbor's property, it now belongs to both as property in common. In most property line issues, friendly communication usually resolves decisions for any mutually owned tree. If it happens to be a protected tree, the City regulations to maintain and protect the tree still apply.