



City of Cleveland | Forestry Tree Work Permit Application - 2026

Department of Parks and Recreation
Division of Urban Forestry
750 E 88th Street, Cleveland Ohio 44108
Phone: 216.664.3104 | E-mail: cstanley@clevelandohio.gov

Please read the terms and conditions of tree work found on the back of this document prior to completing the application. Applications may be submitted to the e-mail address listed above. Forestry will review the permit application and determine if a permit will be issued. If the information requested does not fit in the space provided please submit it with the application within an attachment.

Address/Location: _____

Property Owner: _____

Applicant/Contractor (if different than above): _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Type of Tree Permit Requested:

- Tree Lawn-Planting Other City Property-Planting Pruning Stump Grinding
- Tree Lawn-Removal Tree Protection Other

Tree Contractor (if applicable): _____ License Number: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Location of Tree(s): _____

Proposed Tree Work: _____

Tree Planting Application

Number of Trees to be Planted: _____ Size of Trees (caliper): _____

If multiple trees to be planted, name of ISA Certified Project Arborist: _____ Cert. #: _____

Tree Species (Latin Name(s)): _____

Type of Tree Stock: Balled/Burlap Container Bare root

Source of Nursery Stock: _____

Location of Tree(s) Being Planted: Tree Lawn - Front Tree Lawn - Side Other: _____

If tree lawn, width of tree lawn(s) in ft.: _____

Overhead Utilities at Planting Site Primary Electrical Wires Streetlight/House Service Wires Telecommunication Wires

Have you signed and attached the Tree Maintenance Pledge? Yes No Reason: _____

If planting on city property but not the right-of-way: Aerial map of proposed location(s) Tree Maintenance Agreement

Applicant Signature

Date

Tree Protection Application

Type of Project: Building Permit Excavation Near Public Tree(s) Other: _____

Does the project meet applicability criteria in City of Cleveland Codified Ordinances (COC) §Section 341.02? Yes No

If Yes:

If no existing trees 6 inches DBH or greater on or directly adjacent to the site, a signed and notarized letter prepared by a certified Arborist has been submitted with this application? Yes No

Size of Development Project (acres): _____ Number of Units: _____ Number of Trees 6in. DBH or greater: _____

Number of Proposed Removals: _____ Number of Proposed Plantings: _____

A Tree Preservation Plan (TPP) has been submitted with this application: Yes No, reason: _____

Name of Certified Arborist who prepared the TPP: _____ Cert.#: _____

The TPP includes all requirements outlined in the Tree Preservation Checklist? Yes No, reason: _____

Does the TPP include a plan to preserve, relocate, or replace each tree within and adjacent public trees? Yes No

Does the TPP include measures to protect new and mature trees during construction? Yes No

If No or Other:

Number of public trees affected by proposed work: _____ Number of public trees proposed for removal: _____

Timeline for Proposed Work: _____

Will the buttress roots of any preserved public trees be affected? Yes No Unknown

Will Tree Protection Zone(s) in accordance with *Best Management Standards and ANSI Standards for Arboriculture* be created to protect the tree's trunk, limbs and roots? Yes No, reason: _____

By signing this application, you acknowledge that you have read and understand the requirements for tree protection and preservation outlined by the City of Cleveland's Code of Ordinances including the requirements

Applicant Signature

Date

Permit (for office use only)

Permit Is Hereby Granted*

Applicant: _____ Address/Location: _____

Number of Tree(s): _____ Size of Tree(s): _____ Species of Tree(s): _____

Comments: _____

*Permit is granted under the below provisions and terms and conditions and is subject to inspection by Forestry.

Permit Application Is Denied

Reason: _____

Authorized Forestry Staff

Date

THIS PERMIT EXPIRES SIX (6) MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF ISSUANCE

Provisions: 1) The person to whom this permit is issued, agrees to do the work according to the terms of this permit and to be personally and directly responsible for all damages to persons or property arising from the work hereby permitted or authorized to be done while agreeing to indemnify and hold the City of Cleveland harmless from any loss, claim, damage, or expenses arising therefrom. The said person further agrees to repair all disturbances of public grounds, if disturbed by permit holder under this permit, to the satisfaction of the Director of Parks and Recreation and in case the permit holder fails or neglects to do so, that the said Director may have the work of restoration performed and the permit holder hereby agrees to pay said costs thereof; **2)** Damage to tree(s) located on public grounds is subject to restitution as determined by the Forestry Manager-Cleveland City Code Chapter 509, "Trees;" **3)** Changes to approved tree plans that will not affect compliance with an approved land use review may be submitted for consideration as part of the development. If the project has commenced and alternative tree preservation is proposed, an arborist report must be submitted. The arborist report shall document that the alternative tree protection measures have preserved the health of the trees and the trees have not been injured by the development project. **4) Terms and Conditions -2026**

Terms and Conditions - 2026

Planting

Permits for planting on public property are subject to review by the Division of Urban Forestry.

- Tree Planting Ordinance:** Review Section § 509.13 of the City of Cleveland Codified Ordinance Tree Planting Permit; Planting Plan to ensure compliance.
- Tree Stock:** must conform to ANSI Z60 standards.
- Underground Utilities Must Be Located:** by the Property Owner prior to planting by contacting the Ohio Utility Protection Service (OUPS) at 811 before a permit application will be reviewed. This is a free service.
- Tree Planting Locations:** must be in compliance with the attached spacing requirements.
- Inspection:** by Forestry of the permitted trees may occur after planting; improperly planted trees or trees that do not meet tree stock requirements must be corrected. The applicant will be notified by the Division of Urban Forestry if correction is needed.
- Contractors:** Contractors planting the trees must provide a copy of Liability Insurance showing no less than one million dollars of liability coverage and a Workers' Compensation certificate.
- Multiple Plantings:** For all Tree Planting permits for more than one tree, the permit application must be filled out by an ISA Certified Arborist.
- Non-Right of Way Planting:** Plantings within City owned parks requires written approval from the current Parks Commissioner and the Mayor's Office of Capital Projects. Plantings within City owned cemeteries requires written approval from the current Cemeteries Manager.

Tree Preservation

Permits for development related tree removals on private property are subject to review by the Division of Urban Forestry.

- Tree Preservation Ordinance:** Review Ordinance No. 1121-18 of the City of Cleveland Codified Ordinance to ensure compliance
- Tree Replacement:** Trees must be replaced at a one-to-one rate, or the responsible party must pay the City the value of the tree as established using the Trunk Formula Method outlined in The Guide for Plant Appraisal by the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers
- Tree Protection Measures:** must include protection of roots and soil following Best Management Practices (BMP) and ANSI standards for arboriculture.
- Additional Requirements:** Additional information than that requested in the application may be required by the Commissioner or designee to ensure compliance.
- Criminal and Civil Penalties:** Any person, firm or corporation which violates tree protection requirements outlined in the City of Cleveland Codified Ordinance may be subject to Section 509.99 Criminal and Civil Penalties

Stump Removal

Stumps/roots must be removed to a depth of at least seventeen (17) inches below ground level and the hole refilled with topsoil. Underground utilities must be located prior to stump or root removal by calling the Ohio Utility Protection Service (OUPS) at 811. This is a free service.

THE FOLLOWING TREE WORK ON PUBLIC PROPERTY MUST BE COMPLETED BY A LICENSED TREE CONTRACTOR

The applicant to whom the permit is issued is responsible for the disposal of all tree waste generated by the trimming or removal of the public trees, stumps, and roots.

Removals

Trees on public property are removed to promote public safety and mitigate unsound or damaged tree structure. In most cases, the removal of trees that provide value to the urban landscape and benefit the community will not be approved.

1. **Tree Removals:** on public land must include stump removal, see **Stump Removal** above.
2. **Criminal and Civil Penalties:** Any person, firm or corporation which violates tree protection requirements outlined in the City of Cleveland Codified Ordinance may be subject to Section 509.99 Criminal and Civil Penalties
3. **Additional Requirements:** Contractors must hold current workers compensation certificate and a minimum of 1 million dollars in professional liability insurance at the time of conducting work on trees on public property and must provide proof to Urban Forestry upon request.

Pruning

Public boulevard trees are pruned to promote proper tree structure, to allow for pedestrian and vehicle access, and to remove dead, and damaged wood.

1. **Pruning:** of public trees must be conducted by ISA Certified Arborists and meet current ANSI A300 arboricultural standards and appropriate tools must be used to ensure that all cuts are clean and without torn bark. Prune only to remove damaged, weakened, and diseased branches; to reduce weight on lateral limbs; or to improve the structure of the tree. Remove the least desirable of any crossing or rubbing branches. Topping and pollarding are not allowed practices.
2. **Timing:** for pruning must follow recommended pruning schedules to reduce the spread of insects and disease. Oak, honeylocust, elm, and crabapple should only be pruned November through March while trees are dormant. If pruning must occur outside of this period, then oak and elm tree wounds must be painted from April 1st to November 1st.
3. **Lower Limbs:** should be removed to allow for 8 feet of clearance over sidewalk and 14 feet over roadways.
4. **Additional Requirements:** Contractors must hold current workers compensation certificate and a minimum of 1 million dollars in professional liability insurance at the time of conducting work on trees on public property and must provide proof to Urban Forestry upon request.



City of Cleveland Urban Forestry - Spacing and Sizing Requirements

Spacing

- Minimum width of tree lawn required to plant a tree is 4 feet.
- Do not plant in front of building entrances in order to permit easy access by the Fire Department.
- Do not plant within bus stops.
- Minimum distance between trees (trunk to trunk) shall be 20 feet to 30 feet (depending upon the tree species and other local conditions).
- Minimum distance from a streetlight or utility pole to the tree trunk is 25 feet (this may vary with tree species).
- Minimum distance from a stop sign to the tree trunk is 30 feet.
- Minimum distance from other traffic signs to the tree trunk is 6 feet.
- Where there is on street parking, the distance from a parked car to tree trunk should be 5 feet, to allow for the swing of car doors.
- Minimum distance from a gas or water valve to the tree trunk is 6 feet.
- Minimum distance from a fire hydrant to the tree trunk is 10 feet.
- Minimum distance from the corner of a street intersection to the tree trunk is 40 feet.
- Minimum distance from the edge of the tree pit to any opposite obstruction (building wall, stoop, railing, property line etc.) is from 4 to 6 feet, depending upon local conditions and the amount of sidewalk traffic.

Site Size

- For trees 30 feet at maturity tree lawns must be a minimum of 4-6 feet wide
- For trees 50 feet at maturity tree lawns must be a minimum of 6+ - 8 feet;
- For trees 60+ feet at maturity tree lawns must be a minimum of 9+ feet;

TREE MAINTENANCE PLEDGE

- I WILL plant trees where they have room to grow to maturity, without restriction, and I WILL only plant small maturing trees beneath overhead utility lines to avoid future conflicts.
- I WILL handle trees with care while they are transported from the nursery to the planting site, cover them during transport, avoid wounding the trunk or limbs, store them in a cool environment, keep the root ball moist at all times, and I WILL NEVER lift or move them by the trunk.
- I WILL remove all wire, burlap, straps, and twine from root balls prior to filling the planting hole to avoid eventual root and stem girdling or water wicking out of the planting hole.
- I WILL plant trees at the depth they would be if naturally occurring (first order roots within 2 inches of the soil surface) to avoid conditions favorable for the development of stem girdling roots.
- I WILL mulch trees annually for a minimum of 5 years with good quality wood chips for the benefit of tree roots, expanding the mulch area as the tree and its roots grow, and I WILL NEVER pile mulch around the trunk "volcano" style to avoid trunk decay and discourage stem girdling roots.
- I WILL water newly planted trees regularly in the absence of rainfall for 5 years until they are well established to ensure survival and reduce tree planting costs.
- I WILL NOT create a soil ring around the trunk unless runoff is unavoidable.
- I WILL only stake trees if necessary and I WILL remove all staking and wires after one year to avoid girdling the stem and reducing tree health and longevity.
- I WILL prune young trees to train their structure beginning one year after planting, removing forked stems which could later develop included bark, and then prune as needed thereafter to increase their long-term health, strength, and safety.
- I WILL prune all trees properly according to standards, I WILL provide good examples of pruning to my community.
- I WILL protect tree trunks by installing trunk guards at the time of planting.

Applicant Name:

Organization Affiliation (if applicable):

Signature:

Date:



City of Cleveland
Justin M. Bibb, Mayor

Department of Parks and Recreation
Division of Urban Forestry
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Cleveland, Ohio 44108
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TREE PRESERVATION PLAN

What is a Tree Preservation Plan?

A Tree Preservation Plan is a site plan that shows and labels:

1. Existing and proposed buildings, driveways and other paving, decks, utility services;
2. Material staging area(s): storage of construction related equipment and materials such as vehicles and stockpiles;
3. All existing trees on the site (including trees to be removed);
4. New trees that will be planted;
5. Existing and proposed grading must be indicated by two foot contours; and,
6. Proposed measures to protect existing trees near construction areas.

When Is a Tree Preservation Plan Required?

Per the City of Cleveland Codified Ordinances (COC) § 341.051, a Tree Preservation Plan is required:

1. For any development project that meets the criteria of COC Section 341.02 (Development Project) and is situated on one (1) or more acres of land; and,
2. For any apartment, townhome or condominium projects of four (4) or more units situated on any size parcel of land.

Note: the City of Cleveland Division of Urban Forestry must approve the Tree Preservation Plan before a Building Permit is issued.

What If the Site Has No Existing Trees?

The permit applicant must furnish a signed and notarized letter indicating that there are no existing trees on the property (including in proposed rights-of-way) that are six inches in diameter or greater. An International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist, a Board Certified Master Arborist (BCMA), or a Registered Consulting Arborist (RCA) through the American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA) shall prepare the letter.

Submittal Requirements

For any project that requires a Tree Preservation Plan, one color copy of the Tree Preservation Plan drawn to engineer scale (such as 1" = 20'), must be submitted to the City of Cleveland Division of Urban Forestry in Portable Document Format (PDF) to jkipper@clevelandohio.gov. The tree inventory must accompany the scaled drawing with a 1:1 tree relationship, anything six (6) inches in diameter or greater.

Who Can Prepare a Tree Preservation Plan?

The plan preparer must be an ISA Certified Arborist, a Board Certified Master Arborist through the ISA, or a Registered Consulting Arborist through ASCA.

Preserving Existing Trees

An inventory of existing trees must be included with the submission of the site plan. All trees with a six (6) inch DBH (diameter at breast height measured at 4.5 feet above the ground line) and greater shall be preserved, maintained and protected during construction.

The inventory must include the following information:

1. Name and contact information of preparer including verification of credentials;
2. Tree location on the site plan including the drip line of each tree – including street trees;
3. Tree number must correspond to the tree location on the site plan.
4. Tree genus, species and common name;
5. DBH – must be shown on site plan as well as inventory;
6. Average canopy spread;
7. Condition of tree (vigor, structure);
8. Each tree should be listed to a) preserve & protect, b) relocate, c) remove & replace
9. Notes and details for tree protection, root and soil protection during construction (see ISA's Best Management Practices Managing Trees During Construction and the ANSI A300 (Part 5)-2019 for assistance; and,
10. Critical root zones (CRZ) of protected trees shall be represented on the plan by a circle corresponding to the size (in feet and inches) of the CRZ.

Tree Removals

Trees on the property shall not be removed without prior written approval from the Commissioner of Urban Forestry, Manager of Urban Forestry, or their designee, and only if one (1) or more of the following situations apply:

1. The tree poses a significant risk to persons and/or property. The City may require a tree risk assessment be performed by the Manager of Urban Forestry, their designee, or a TRAQ Arborist;
2. The tree is planted too close to an existing structure, such that it is either damaging or has the clear potential to damage the structure;

3. The tree inhibits an infrastructure repair due to its proximity to the needed infrastructure repair. Trees should not be removed simply because a sidewalk is raised or cracked, unless it is determined that removal of the tree is necessary for the sidewalk repair;
4. The tree has structural defects (e.g., split trunk, poor branch attachments), is damaged to the point that it cannot recover and grow properly, or that it will grow in a misshapen or unsightly manner that could result in failure;
5. The tree is infested with an epidemic insect or disease where the recommended control is not applicable and removal is necessary to prevent transmission of the insect or disease to other trees. The City may require this condition to be verified by the Commissioner, his/her designee or an ISA Certified Arborist; and,
6. The Commissioner or a designee determines that the removal of the tree is necessary to carry out construction in compliance with approved plans.

A person, firm or corporation may appeal the decision whether to remove a tree to the Commissioner within ten (10) business days of the date of the notice of the decision. The Commissioner shall have jurisdiction to affirm, reverse or modify the decision and shall do so within ten (10) days of the date of the appeal. A person aggrieved by a final decision of the Commissioner may further appeal to the City of Cleveland Board of Zoning Appeals (BOZA) within thirty (30) days after the Commissioner's decision.

Replacement Trees

A tree that is removed shall be replaced with a tree of appropriate species as selected by the Commissioner or designee and in a location where it will grow to replace the removed tree without posing the risks for which the tree was removed.

1. Replacement trees shall be 1.75 – 3.0” in caliper and B&B nursery stock;
2. Trees shall be purchased from a nursery in the same hardiness zone as Cleveland;
3. Trees shall be planted by an ISA Certified Arborist; and,
4. Plan must show planting and staking details.

Instead of replacing a tree removed, a developer may pay the City the value of the tree as established using the Trunk Formula Method outlined in The Guide for Plant Appraisal by the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers, as may be amended from time to time, or other tree replacement analysis provided by similar publication. All funds collected pursuant to this division shall be deposited in the Tree Preservation Fund established under Chapter 509 of the Codified Ordinances.

Civil Penalties for Damaged Trees or Trees Removed Without Approval

Please refer to COC § 341.053 for details.