

**District of West Vancouver
CORPORATE POLICY**

Parks & Community Services	Tree Work on District of West Vancouver Property
Policy #02-70-199	
File #2190-01-01	

1.0 Purpose

This policy has three sections:

- 1.1 **Section 1** ensures the safety of the residents of West Vancouver through a process with respect to inspection and mitigation of hazard trees on District of West Vancouver property.
- 1.2 **Section 2** establishes the process following an application by local residents to work on non-hazardous trees on District of West Vancouver property.
- 1.3 **Section 3** establishes the process for residents applying to cut privately owned trees in the following areas:
 - a) Environmentally sensitive areas
 - i) Areas governed by senior government Regulations or Acts
- 1.4 Caulfeild Land Use Contract Area
- 1.5 Other tree covenant areas

2.0 Policy

Section 1: Hazard Trees on District Property

Upon request, the *Environmental Coordinator* or *qualified staff* will inspect trees on District property and will mitigate hazards to the public or property according to the procedures detailed in this Policy. If additional work not related to safety is requested, the District will consider the request subject to the conditions outlined in Section 2 of this Policy.

Under no circumstances will the District transfer liability or responsibility for damage to other property owners.

This section applies to all trees located wholly or in part on District property, dedicated roads, parks or any other publicly owned land.

As requested or upon notification, the *Environmental Coordinator*, or other *qualified staff*, will inspect the subject trees based upon the procedures prescribed in the “INSPECTION PROCEDURE”, included below. If trees are deemed to be hazardous according to these procedures, the hazard will be mitigated at District expense as soon as practical and with limited consultation. The tree(s) identified with the highest hazard rating will be corrected first.

Should a resident disagree with the tree assessment by the *qualified staff*, they may obtain a second opinion from another qualified Arborist, at the resident’s expense. This assessment will be reviewed and considered before a final decision is made. The *Environmental Coordinator* will make the final decision.

- 1. NOTE - Due to budget and manpower constraints, the District does not have a regular inspection routine for all public trees within the Municipality.**

Inspection Procedure

Requests for inspection will be generated as follows:

1. All requests originating from the public or other sources will be received and processed by the Parks Department.
2. The request will be logged into the current District tracking system and a “Tree Inspection” form will be generated.
3. The Environmental Coordinator, or qualified staff, will carry out an initial inspection and the attending inspector will complete a “Tree Inspection” form.
4. Trees will be assessed and rated as per the procedures below.
5. The Parks Department will administer the contracts for tree work.
6. All tree work in the District of West Vancouver will be accompanied by a corresponding TREE PERMIT (at no charge) detailing the following:
 - Civic address of work
 - Permit number
 - Name of tree company
 - Description of work
 - Comments

Site Inspection Procedure

At a minimum, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Determine ownership of trees.
2. Determine if a target(s) exists.
3. Document species and estimated diameter at breast height (dbh).
4. Inspect tree from top to bottom using non-intrusive methods only.
5. Document any visual defects.
6. Detail mitigation work as applicable.

Tree Rating Procedure

The inspection process will generate a tree rating priority based on condition and urgency. The following table is a summary of the tree ratings and corresponding work schedule.

Tree Rating	Work Schedule
Priority 1	Sent immediately to contractor for mitigation.
Priority 2	Hazard mitigated through the next tree contract.
Priority 3	Hazard mitigated through the next tree contract, but the work may be deferred due to workload considerations.

Details of Tree Work Priorities

Priority 1

This is a tree that has one or more of the following characteristics:

- Signs of ground movement or heaving
- Recent cracking on the bole of the tree
- Hung-up tree balanced on an adjacent tree
- Hung-up limb over actual or stationary targets.
- Failed tree lying on property or road
- Dead tree with extensive decay visible to the inspector and an obvious stationary target.

This rating has the first priority for appropriate work. The inspector will immediately send the required work to a contractor for mitigation. These trees shall be dealt with as soon as practical within work schedule limits. Public notification will be at the discretion of the inspector.

Priority 2

This is a tree that has one or more of the following characteristics:

- Fruiting bodies of known heart rots
- Unusual lean
- Visible defect that could result in catastrophic failure of tree
- Dead with minor decay evident to inspector and an obvious target
- Obstruction of traffic signs
- Limbs obstructing driver visibility
- Interference with electrical distribution or transmission lines *

Trees assessed as “Priority 2” shall be dealt with as soon as practical within work schedule limits.

Trees assessed as “Priority 2” will be documented for mitigation and included in the next bid package to be sent to private contractors for work. These trees will be considered the next priority for action after “Priority 1”. Requests for contractor bids are generally sent once every 2 months.

* **NOTE:** To be referred to BC Hydro.

Priority 3

Trees in this category have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Dead tree with a target of moderate to low frequency and minimal visible decay
- Encroachment of branches onto house and/or roots causing some form of damage to boulevards or private property
- Limbs interfere with residential electrical utility feed
- Visible defect that could result in partial failure of tree with a *moderate to low frequency target*

- Where deemed appropriate by the inspector, spiral thinning of trees to reduce wind loading on sound trees with a *high frequency target*
- Thinning of immature trees for stand management
- Inappropriate *volunteer trees* on boulevards, in road ends or rights of way.

Trees assessed as “Priority 3” will be documented for mitigation and be included in the next bid package to be sent to private contractors for work. These trees will be considered the next priority for action after “Priority 1” and “Priority 2”, but may be dealt with as the workload allows.

Public Notification Standards

When safety related tree work is issued by the Environmental Coordinator or qualified staff, the District will endeavour to notify residents of impending work. **These notification standards are not applicable for trees rated as “Priority 1” removals or where other assessments of urgency are determined by the Arborist.** Within the Priority 2 and 3 categories the following will apply.

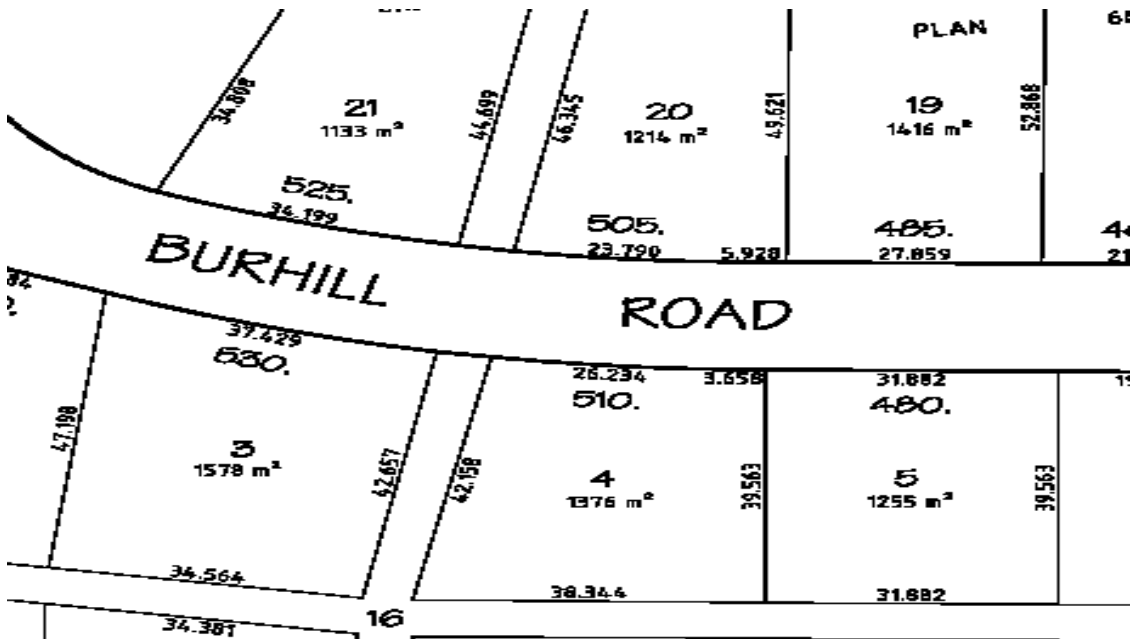
Low impact pruning or removal. This includes as a minimum, notification by the District to the properties directly abutting to the proposed work.

Moderate impact pruning or removal. This includes as a minimum, notification by the District to five properties adjacent to the proposed work.

High impact pruning or removal. The Environmental Coordinator, or appropriate staff, may contact the local neighbourhood association and the general neighbourhood. The District shall also install signage in the vicinity of the site indicating the proposed work. Based on the response, further public consultation may be considered. This process shall occur a minimum of 5 working days in advance of the proposed commencement of work.

Sample Tree Inspection Form*

(*Form may not be exactly as illustrated)



Tree Inspection Information

Date Inspected: 03-May-2002	Address		
	510	Burhill	Road
Contact Phone Number: 604-925-7192	Inspectors Name:		
REQUEST INFORMATION			
Inspect 2 cedar trees at the North Side of 510 Burhill and phone homeowner after inspection			
Inspectors Notes: Notify homeowners as marked			
Tree 1: Spiral thin by 20 %		Priority 2	
Tree 2 Large Broken limb to remove		Priority 2	

Section 2: Tree Work (Non-Hazard) On District Property

A request by a resident for tree work of a non-hazardous nature is initiated by the submission via a “***District Recognized***” ***Tree Contractor*** of a tree cutting permit application to the District. The tree permit for work on District property will be issued to the District Recognized Tree Contractor. A current list is available from the District of West Vancouver Parks Department.

The permit fees, associated cost of tree work and the cost of restitution will be the responsibility of the applicant. Letters of credit from the tree companies will be required to ensure that work is done in compliance with details of the Permit, which includes restitution requirements.

Any proposed work within limits of approach BC Hydro transmission or distribution lines must be approved by BC Hydro prior to application being received by the District of West Vancouver.

The following must be received **BEFORE** a tree cutting permit application will be reviewed by staff:

1. District of West Vancouver Tree Cutting Permit Application including the following:
 - a) Signatures of registered owners
 - b) Name of tree company to perform work
 - c) Associated fees and deposits
 - d) Sketch/legal plan clearly indicating ownership of trees and proposed prescription for each tree
 - e) Completed signature form including signature of affected neighbours with **80% approval** of the proposed work
 - f) **Pictures** of the trees indicating which trees are to be worked on.
2. Tree Permit Fees
 - a) Permit fees are set as per attached schedule (Appendix 1)
3. Trees Exempt from Permit Requirements
 - a) A “hedge” abutting the applicant’s property will be considered exempt for “regular maintenance” pruning. A hedge is not exempt where removal is requested.

Note:

Previously topped trees. Previously topped trees may be re-topped, if at the discretion of the Environmental Coordinator or qualified staff, the re-topping would be a suitable prescription. It is recognized that a topped tree still has wildlife and aesthetic value as well as having an important function with respect to maintaining slope stability, privacy, groundwater retention, and reducing precipitation impacts to the soil. If the tree is allowed to be re-topped, then other appropriate tree species and/or vegetation **may** be required to be planted near the re-topped tree(s) as replacement for the possible future removal of the re-topped tree(s).

Approval Process

After receiving the application, staff will review the tree cutting permit application with the following objectives:

- Ensure work is professionally acceptable
- Consider viability of tree versus proposed work if it does not include removal
- Respect wildlife uses for the tree(s)
- Encourage minimizing aesthetic impact by staging large jobs over a longer period of time.

If these objectives cannot be achieved and Staff and the applicant are unable to reach an agreement, the District reserves the right to refuse the permit request.

Definitions, Consent Requirements, Examples of Tree Work on District Property:

Low impact pruning or removal

Definition

This work could be deemed "view maintenance" and the work will result in relatively low aesthetic impact to the neighbourhood.

Consent Requirements

This includes as a minimum, the distribution of the consent form by the applicant to the properties abutting the proposed work and will in most cases require consent of 80% of the neighbours within a 30 meter radius of the proposed work.

Examples:

- Removal of hedges not greater than six metres in height

- Removal of single trees up to a maximum number of four that are not greater than six metres in height
- Removal of branches from a tree(s), that does not significantly alter the aesthetic appearance of the area
- Re-topping of hedge that does not result in the removal of more than six metres (20 feet) of new growth.

Moderate impact pruning or removal

Definition

This work could be deemed "view encroachment" and this work will likely result in some aesthetic impact to the neighbourhood.

Consent Requirements

This includes as a minimum, the distribution of the consent form by the applicant to 5 properties adjacent to proposed work, and will in most cases require consent of 80% of the neighbours within a 50-meter radius of the proposed work.

Examples

- Replacement of street trees
- Removal of hedge greater than six metres in height
- Removal of more than four trees that are less than six metres in height
- Pruning of branches that will result in significant aesthetic impact to the surrounding area
- Re-topping of trees that will result in the removal of more than six metres of new growth.

High impact pruning or removal:

Definition

This work could be deemed "view creation" and this work will likely result in significant aesthetic impact to the neighbourhood.

Consent Requirements

This includes as a minimum, the distribution of the consent form by the applicant to 15 properties adjacent to proposed work, and will require the consent of 80% of the neighbours or up to a 150-metre radius of the proposed work. The Environmental Coordinator, or qualified staff, may

contact the local neighbourhood association. Based on the response from the neighbourhood, a public consultation meeting may be arranged. This process shall occur a minimum of 5 working days in advance of the proposed commencement of work.

Examples:

- Removal/replacement of significant size trees
- Re-topping significant quantity of trees where the resultant aesthetic impact will be high.

Section 3: Trees on Private Property in Environmentally Sensitive Areas, Caulfeild Land Use Contract, Covenant Areas or Other Tree Management Areas (E.G., Lower Caulfeild Park Management Plan)

When tree(s) on private property within environmentally sensitive areas, covenant areas, the Caulfeild Land Use Contract or other tree management areas are proposed for tree work, the resident's **Tree Contractor** must make a tree cutting permit application to the District.

The permit fees, deposits, associated cost of tree work and the cost of restitution will be the responsibility of the applicant.

The following must be received **BEFORE** a permit application will be reviewed:

1. District of West Vancouver Tree Cutting Permit Application including the following:
 - a. Signatures of registered owners
 - b. Name of tree company to perform work
 - c. Associated fees and deposits
 - d. Sketch/legal plan clearly indicating ownership of trees and proposed prescription for each tree
 - e. **Pictures** of the trees indicating which trees are to be worked on
 - f. Where work could impact environmentally sensitive areas, an appropriate impact assessment by a qualified professional is required. Compensation plans must also be included with this assessment.
 - g. Where required by covenant document, requests may be forwarded to the Director of Parks & Community Services for final approval.
 - h. Where appropriate, review with senior Government agencies may be required.
2. Permit Fee:

Permit fee as per attached schedule (Appendix 1)

3. Process

The proposed work will be reviewed by the Environmental Coordinator or qualified staff and the applicant notified as appropriate. When necessary, the application may be forwarded to senior Government agencies for review and approval.

Definitions:

Environmental Coordinator

Environmental Coordinator is defined as the District staff person holding the position of Environmental Coordinator and/or Municipal Arborist

Qualified Staff

Qualified staff is defined as a person in the employment or under contract with the District of West Vancouver who, at a minimum, is a current International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist, or a Workers Compensation Board qualified wildlife/hazard tree inspector. Staff or contractors with a combination of education and experience, such as a professional forester, would be included in this definition. The Environmental Coordinator will determine which staff members meet this criteria.

Qualified Environmental Professional

Qualified Environmental Professional is defined as a person who with a combination of education and experience, such as a professional biologist, can determine the potential impacts of the proposed works on the environment. This individual can also recommend strategies to mitigate and, where necessary, compensate for these potential impacts. The Environmental Coordinator will determine which professionals meet these criteria.

District Recognized Tree Contractor

These contractors are defined as meeting, at a minimum, the following criteria:

- Current West Vancouver business license
- Current Workers' Compensation coverage in good standing
- Liability coverage in an amount not less than \$2 million naming the District of West Vancouver as an Additional Insured.

Low Impact Pruning or Removal

Refer to the definition as detailed in Policy

Moderate Impact Pruning or Removal

Refer to the definition as detailed in Policy

High Impact Pruning or Removal

Refer to the definition as detailed in Policy

Tree Contractor

For work on private property falling under this policy, a resident may use a contractor not recognized to work on District property, but as a minimum this contractor must have a current West Vancouver business license.

Hedge

A boundary, or part of a boundary which comprises a row of bushes or low trees growing closely together, and which have been managed through cutting to maintain a more or less dense, linear barrier.

Target

People or property which could be struck injured or damaged by the failure or collapse of any tree. Target frequency refers to the likelihood of persons or property being in the way of a collapsing tree. Consideration shall be given as to whether the target can be reasonably removed or isolated to reduce the hazard rating to a less than significant level.

Approval Date: July 05, 2004	Approved by: Council
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Fee Schedule

Tree Permit Fees – Non Hazard Trees on District of West Vancouver Property

- a) Low impact Work - \$50.00 fee
 - i) Deposit – Letter of Credit (Tree Company)
- Moderate Impact Work - \$250.00
 - i) Deposit – Letter of Credit (Tree Company)
- High Impact – Quote from Parks Department
 - i) Deposit – As per quote

Tree Permit Fees - Private Property

- a) A permit fee of \$50.

Explanation and Amounts of Letters of Credit

A “Letter of Credit” in the amount of \$2000.00 will be required from “District Recognized Tree Contractors”.