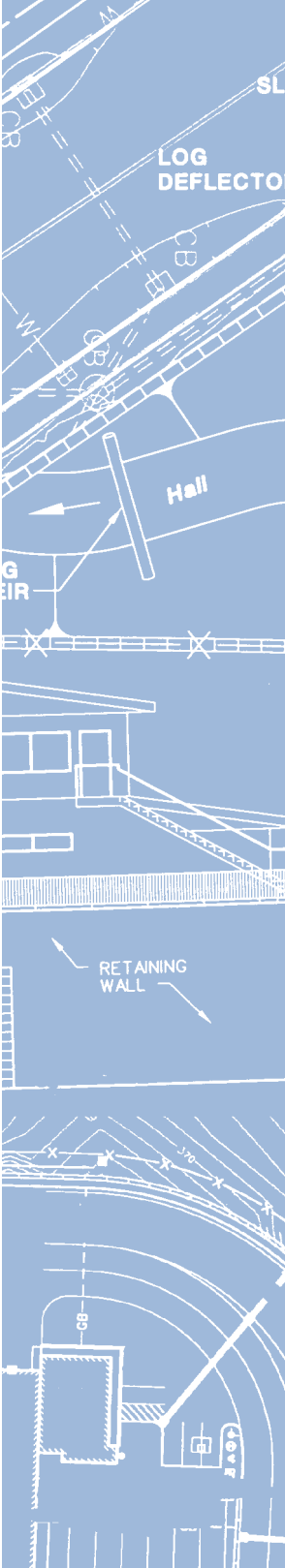




Hazardous Tree Removal



Q: “What can I do if I have a hazardous tree on or next to my property?”

A: Hazardous trees are trees with significant structural defects that are likely to lead to failure; increasing the potential to fall or break and causing property damage, injuries and power outages. These trees may be leaning, or have suffered insect damage or decay, or have a number of other structural problems. Fall and winter windstorms will often bring hazardous trees down abruptly. Inspecting trees for problems, particularly before and after storms, can prevent many potential problems and property damage.

If you have a hazardous tree, one of your first considerations is its location. An individual hazardous tree or stand of hazardous trees may be on your property, within a preserved or protected subdivision community tract or Native Growth Protection Area/Easement (NGPA/E), on your neighbor’s property or within county right-of-way.

If the tree is not presenting an immediate danger to structures on your property, but you suspect that the tree may be diseased or dying and may present future problems, you should contact a certified arborist (tree specialist) for a report on the condition of the tree. Look under “Tree Service” in the yellow pages of the telephone directory. The cost of an arborist’s report is the responsibility of the property owner. If the tree is located in a NGPA/E tract or community tract, don’t forget to also contact the Homeowners Association before taking any action to treat or remove the tree. Refer to the guide on the back side of this flier for additional information.

Removing Trees From a Native Growth Protection Area

If a tree is hazardous and must be removed from a NGPA/E easement area or NGPA/E tract, it may be necessary to replant to mitigate and restore the ecological benefits formerly provided by the tree. Replanted trees will, over time, provide structural diversity within the NGPA and increase the overall species diversity.

To remove and replace trees in the NGPA/E, please follow these steps:

1. The tree should be felled into the NGPA. It is preferable to leave as much of the tree standing as possible, to provide a standing snag. Special care should be taken not to impact the other live trees within the NGPA. This may require the tree to be felled in sections.
2. The stump should be left remaining intact and shall not be removed. The stump will continue to provide soil stability for the root system.
3. No portion of the tree is to be removed for firewood or any other use. The felled tree should be left to decompose and provide organic matter to the soil.
4. Native trees should be planted to mitigate (off set) the ecological benefits the removed tree provided, as follows:

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- Choose native species, such as western red cedar, western hemlock, Douglas fir, big-leaf maple, vine maple, beaked hazelnut, Oregon ash, Western crab apple and Pacific dogwood (or consult your local nursery for additional native tree species),
- Plant in the general location of the hazardous tree within the NGPA, and
- Provide supplemental care and monitoring for a few years to ensure survival.

Trees that are damaged, dying or knocked over and located within the NGPA/E that pose no threat to structures or present no life/safety issues should not be removed. They should be left as part of the natural ecological system, to eventually decompose and provide organic matter to the soil.

To Learn More

- The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) is the world’s leading organization devoted to tree care. They publish a 17- title Tree Care Consumer Information Series that will have information you can use. See their website at <http://www.treesaregood.com/>
- ISA’s Pacific Northwest Chapter has a website called Landscape Tree Care 101 where you can learn about a variety of tree care topics: <http://www.pnwisa.org/tree-care.html>. They also have a “Hazardous Tree Prevention webpage, <http://www.pnwisa.org/http/>, and a bulletin on “How to Recognize and Prevent Tree Hazards, <http://www.pnwisa.org/HazTree.pdf>
- WSU Extension has a publication, “Are Your Trees Hazardous”: <http://gardening.wsu.edu/column/02-07-99.htm>

Location of Tree	Steps To Follow
On your property and NOT in a NGPA/E	You may remove the tree.
On your property, but within a NGPA/E encumbering the property.	On your property, but within a NGPA/E encumbering the property Contact the Planning and Development Services Department (PDS), Development Review and Construction Division Supervisor at 425-388-3311, ext. 2390. Please allow 24 hours for a return call.
On a subdivision community tract, subdivision open space tract, or subdivision NGPA/E where the tract is owned by all lot owners of the subdivision.	Contact the Homeowners Association regarding rules and regulations regarding the removal of the tree. (Typically each lot owner within the subdivision has an undivided interest in the tract, with control of the tract regulated by the subdivision Homeowners Association.) If the area where the tree is located is an NGPA/E, contact the PDS Development Review and Construction Division Supervisor at 425-388-3311, ext. 2390.
On a neighboring adjacent lot and NOT in a NGPA/E.	Contact the neighbor to work out arrangements to remove the tree.
On a neighboring adjacent lot and in a NGPA/E.	Contact the neighbor to work out arrangements to remove the tree AND contact the PDS Development Review and Construction Division Supervisor at 425-388-3311, ext. 2390.
On a County Right-of-Way	“Right of way” means all property in which the county has any form of ownership, title or interest and which is held for public road purposes, regardless of whether or not any road exists thereon or whether or not it is used, improved, or maintained for public travel. Please contact Public Works at 425-388-6453 to determine right of way status and to obtain further information regarding the process for tree removal.

This bulletin is intended only as an information guide. The information may not be complete and is subject to change. For complete legal information, refer to the Snohomish County Code.