

# GUIDELINES FOR TREE REMOVAL PERMITTING PROCESS



Edwin M. Lee  
Mayor

Mohammed Nuru  
Director

**Jerry Sanguinetti**  
Manager

Urban Forestry Permits  
and Policy Group  
Bureau of Street Use and Mapping  
1680 Mission St., 1st floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
tel 415-554-6700

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Street trees are important assets of neighborhoods and commercial districts. The citizens of San Francisco value street trees and have mandated their protection. Significant trees are trees that are within 10' of the public right-of-way and also meet one of the following size requirements: 20' or greater in height, 15' or greater canopy width, 12" or greater diameter of trunk measured at 4.5' above grade. Therefore, a **permit is required before any street tree or significant tree – alive, dead or hazardous – can be removed.** Tree removal without a permit is a violation of Article 16 of the Public Works code and penalties may apply.

## PERMIT APPLICATION MATERIALS

Submit the following materials by mail to:

**City and County of San Francisco**  
**P.O. Box 7461**  
**San Francisco, CA 94120-7461**

- Completed application form
- Non-refundable fee, made payable to **CCSF-DPW-BUF**  
*Fees as of July 2015*
  - **1-3 trees** (non-construction related): \$348
  - **1-3 trees** (construction or development): \$701
  - **4-9 trees** : \$933
  - **10+ trees** : \$1,402
- Include proof of damage caused by trees such as paid invoices for repair. Although a tree has caused sidewalk, sewer or other property damage, removal may not be required, and a permit may be granted.
- If the removal is related to new construction, include site plans accurately showing tree locations as well as your building permit number.

## REMOVAL PROCESS

- A San Francisco Public Works inspector will evaluate the trees for removal
- If the Department recommends the tree be removed, it will be posted for a period up to 30 days. If objections to the removal are received, the removal will be scheduled for public hearing.
- If the Department denies the removal, the applicant can request the case be scheduled for a public hearing.
- After the hearing, a hearing officer will make a recommendation to the Director of San Francisco Public Works, who in turn will issue a final decision. The Director's decision may be appealed to the Board of Appeals.

## FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Have an International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist evaluate the tree and provide a written report. Certified Arborists can be found in the Yellow Pages under the heading "Tree Services" or the ISA website at <http://isa-arbor.com>.
- Use a licensed and insured certified arborist for any tree work.

For each tree removed, a **replacement tree planting is required.** For more information, please call the Bureau of Urban Forestry at **641-2676** or visit our site <http://sfpublicworks.org/trees>

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## SUMMARY OF DPW ORDER 178,631 PLANTING GUIDELINES

It is recommended that the Permittee carry adequate liability insurance for his/her own protection and in order to carry the foregoing provisions into effect.

### GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- ❑ Trees to be planted must be from a minimum 15-gallon sized nursery container.
- ❑ Depending on the sidewalk width, the maximum new basin size is 4ft. by 4ft; the minimum is 2 ½ ft. by 3ft.
- ❑ In no case shall the new street tree result in an obstructed sidewalk width of less than 48 inches.
- ❑ Raised structures around the tree basin can present a tripping hazard and are not allowed.
- ❑ A basin cover, perimeter of red brick, or other approved material is encouraged in the tree basin in the following cases:
  - a. The sidewalk is less than 7ft. wide
  - b. Bus Zones when a planting is allowed
  - c. Areas with heavy pedestrian traffic
  - d. Sidewalk with a grade of 10% or greater
  - e. Tree basins adjacent to parking meters

### MINIMUM RESTRICTIONS

Trees **may not** be planted within :

- ❑ 25ft. in front of a traffic signal
- ❑ 25 ft. of the property line on the approach to an intersection and 5ft of the property line on the exit from an intersection as the traffic flows IF a corner property
- ❑ 9, 15, and 21 feet of a street light for small, medium, and large mature size trees respectively
- ❑ 6ft of a utility pole
- ❑ 3ft of a parking sign unless the Department of Parking and Traffic agree to relocate the sign
- ❑ 3ft of a gas line, water line, electrical conduit and sidewalk furniture
- ❑ 5ft of a sewer line
- ❑ 5ft of a fire hydrant
- ❑ 10ft from a fire escape
- ❑ A bus zone when the sidewalk is less than or equal to 15ft
- ❑ A restricted parking Blue Zone
- ❑ 12-15ft of existing trees if both are small mature sized trees

The property owner shall check for the presence of underground utilities in the area of proposed planting and shall be solely responsible in avoiding interference with or damage to electric or telephone conduits, sewers and other utilities. Check for the location of your underground gas and utility services by calling Underground Service Alert (USA) at 800-227-2600.

**KEEP THESE INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR REFERENCE**

# APPLICATION FOR TREE REMOVAL PERMIT

Mail complete applications to : City and County of San Francisco, PO Box 7461, San Francisco, CA 94120-7461

Check payable to: CCSF – DPW – BUF | Telephone: 415-641-2676 | Fax: 415-522-7684



Edwin M. Lee  
Mayor

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Director

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Manager

Street Use and Mapping  
1155 Market St., 3rd floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
tel 415-554-5810

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DATE \_\_\_\_\_ APPLICATION # \_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED BY \_\_\_\_\_

# TO REMOVE \_\_\_\_\_ SPECIES \_\_\_\_\_

# TO PLANT \_\_\_\_\_ SPECIES \_\_\_\_\_

## TREES TO BE REMOVED

Street Tree(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Species \_\_\_\_\_

Street Tree(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Species \_\_\_\_\_

Sig.Tree(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Species \_\_\_\_\_

## REASON FOR REMOVAL

## SITE INFORMATION

Site Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Cross Street: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_ Lot: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPLICANT/AUTHORIZED AGENT INFORMATION Check here if same as above

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to hold harmless the City and County of San Francisco, its agents, officers, and employees from any damage or injury caused by reason of planting, placement, maintenance, or removal of the planter or plants. The owner or owners of the respective property shall be solely liable for any damages. The City has the right to make changes in parking restrictions, such as designating new bus stops or blue zoned parking areas. If parking restrictions change adjacent to your sidewalk landscaping, your sidewalk landscaping permit may be rescinded and you will be required to remove the landscaping and reinstall concrete sidewalk paving. Any proposed changes in parking restrictions will require public notice and require a public hearing prior to implementation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant/Authorized Agent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Property Owner

\_\_\_\_\_ Authorized Agent