



Hazard Tree Removal Information and Application Checklist

King County Code (KCC) 21A.06.1331 defines hazard trees as trees with a structural defect, combination of defects, or disease resulting in structural defect that, under the normal range of environmental conditions at the site, will result in the loss of a major structural component of that tree in a manner that will:

- A. Damage a residential structure or accessory structure, place of employment or public assembly or approved parking for a residential structure or accessory structure or place of employment or public assembly
- B. Damage an approved road or utility facility; or
- C. Prevent emergency access in the case of medical hardship.

Prior to cutting or removal of any trees you may contact the Department of Local Services, Permitting Division (Permitting) service center to ensure compliance with applicable codes and to discuss permit requirements.

Please use the following table to determine what permit you will need when requesting to remove hazard trees on your property.

Hazard Tree Action Table

Hazard Tree Removal Activity	Tree Removal Permit	Emergency Tree Removal ¹
within Urban Growth Area	Permit required if significant tree retention standards under KCC16.82.156 are not met	Permit not required ²
outside of critical area and buffer	Not required if: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Removal does not exceed the clearing limits of any property specific development standards and/or special district overlays on the parcel; and 2. Removal is not subject to regulations for general clearing in KCC 16.82.051. 	Permit not required ²
within critical area or buffer	Permit required in Wetland & Buffer, Aquatic Area & Buffer, Wildlife Area & Buffer, Channel Migration, Landslide Hazard & Buffer, and Steep Slope Hazard & Buffer	Permit not required ²
within King County Right-Of-Way	Contact King County Road Services Division at (206) 477-8100	Contact King County Road Services Division at (206) 477-8100
within tract or open space or Native Growth Protection Easement	Permit Required	Permit not required ²

¹ Emergency tree removal is allowed to prevent imminent danger to persons or structures.

² Permitting Division may request photographs of the tree and the threatening condition to determine if the tree removal qualifies as an imminent threat.

Hazard Tree Removal, continued

Determining if your tree qualified as a hazard

In most instances, a qualified professional will be required to evaluate your tree(s) for the following:

- Tree health and condition.
- Proximity to a “target” that could be impacted by tree failure.
- Ability to abate the risk by managing the tree’s condition through pruning, cabling, or other preventative measures.

Qualified Professional

Qualified professionals are individuals with relevant education and training in arboriculture or urban forestry, having two or more of the following credentials:

- International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist
- Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) as established by the Pacific Northwest Chapter of ISA (or equivalent)
- American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA) registered Consulting Arborist
- Society of American Foresters (SAF) Certified Forester for Forest Management Plans

For a current list of certified arborists visit the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture ([PNW-ISA](#)) or contact PNW-ISA at 503-874-8263.

Submitting a Hazard Tree Removal Permit application:

Apply for a permit online at, [MyBuildingPermit.com](#). A complete application requires:

1. Site Plan illustrating the location, quantity, species, and size (DBH³) of tree(s) to be removed and proposed replacement trees
2. ISA Basic Tree Risk Assessment Form provided by a qualified professional or photographs clearly showing the hazard
3. Permit review fees

Other applicable requirements:

Once your application is deemed complete, review of your proposal can begin. Additional information may be requested during the review process. Other important requirements may include:

1. Legal Access Documentation⁴
2. Critical Areas Report
3. Arborist Report
4. Tree mitigation planting plan
5. [Landscaping bond quantity worksheet](#)

Additional Resources:

³ Diameter Breast Height (DBH) is the standard to measure the size of a tree and is 54 inches (or 4.5 feet) above the ground.

⁴ Documentation of a recorded easement, or private access tract.

Apply On-Line at
[MyBuildingPermit.com](#)

Select: King County | Clearing and Grading | Any Project Type | Trees and Vegetation Only



Hazard Tree Removal, continued

For additional information or questions, applicants may email PermitQuestions@KingCounty.gov or click the link to [submit your question online](#).

Department of Local Services, [Permitting Division](#) Website

[Fee Guide 05](#)

[King County Code Chapter 16.82](#)