ARBORISTS — GUIDE

# When you need a tree removal permit

*Examples from Portland, Toronto and Austin, plus the official route for protected trees in England.*

Updated November 10, 2026

Start with the address and the local tree authority. A private garden is not proof that a tree is exempt. The examples below are a starting point. Confirm the current rule and any exceptions before work starts.

## Portland, Oregon

Portland says a permit is required to remove any street tree. Its page says private trees need a removal permit at **12 inches diameter**, measured **4.5 feet** above ground, and larger. Trees of any size may need a permit in certain overlay zones and plan districts. Heritage tree work has its own permit route. These are the city's published rules, fetched 2026-11-10. Portland, Do I Need a Tree Permit?.

Ask the city to confirm whether the trunk is in the right of way. A tree can look like a garden tree while standing in a regulated street area. Do not infer ownership from a fence line.

## Toronto, Ontario

Toronto's current page protects private trees of **30 centimetres diameter or more**, street trees of any size, and designated ravine and natural features. Injury as well as removal can need a permit. Its overview flags tree bylaw changes. Use the current application page rather than an old contractor summary. Toronto, When to Apply For a Tree or Ravine Permit, fetched 2026-11-10.

Check the city's instructions for measurement and multi-stem trees. Ask about excavation, storage and equipment access near retained trees. A removal application does not itself authorize work.

## Austin, Texas

Austin identifies protected trees at **19 inches diameter or more**, measured **4.5 feet** above ground. Its page says removal of a protected tree needs a permit, subject to the stated code exceptions. Certain species at **24 inches or more** may be heritage trees. Smaller trees can also be regulated in site plan projects. Use the City Arborist route for your project. Austin, City Arborist, fetched 2026-11-10.

Do not assume that a dead or damaged tree is outside the process. Austin provides a specific route for dead, diseased and imminent hazard trees in the same source.

## England

The UK government's guidance for England covers Tree Preservation Orders and trees in conservation areas. It describes consent and notice procedures, with exceptions. Ask the local planning authority to check the address and tree before you book work. This England guidance is not a rule for Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. UK government, Tree Preservation Orders and trees in conservation areas, fetched 2026-11-10.

## Keep a decision record

Save the official page, the authority's reply and any issued permit. Note which tree each document covers. Ask who will submit the application and who will meet replacement or protection conditions. Confirm neighbour consent and access separately with the relevant parties. If danger is immediate, keep people clear and contact the emergency service or utility as appropriate. Ask the authority about its emergency process; do not treat this guide as an exemption.

All legal summaries above use the named official sources, fetched 2026-11-10. This guide does not decide whether a permit is needed for your tree.

## Frequently asked questions

**Does private ownership remove the need for a permit?**

No blanket rule applies. The cited cities regulate some private trees. Ask the local authority about your address, tree and work.