

Tree Preservation Guidelines

Trees help purify the air we breathe, contribute to biodiversity, provide wildlife habitat, beautify and enrich our lives throughout the year, sequester carbon, and provide a sense of well-being in our urban environment. These valuable assets require our dedicated stewardship.

The City of Edmonton Corporate Tree Management Policy and the recently enacted Public Tree Bylaw 18825 mandate that all City trees be protected and preserved. The Public Tree Bylaw 18825 allows for enforcement when City trees are not adequately protected and preserved. Where these requirements cannot be met and trees are damaged, equitable compensation for that loss may be pursued by the City from the civic or private entity causing the damage or loss in accordance with principles established in the Corporate Tree Management Policy.

The following Tree Preservation Guidelines have been developed to provide information on how to preserve and protect City trees before, during and post work activities to maintain the health of the tree and prevent or minimize the likelihood of tree loss or damage. These guidelines may be reviewed and updated by the City of Edmonton at any time.

A Tree Preservation Plan or Protection Plan will include critical details about site conditions, work activities and recommendations and actions that will take place onsite prior, during and post work activities to preserve City trees.

When Tree Preservation Guidelines Apply

The Public Tree Bylaw 18825 mandates that a Tree Permit is required whenever work¹ is planned within 5 meters of any Boulevard and Open Space Tree(s) (as measured from the edge of the trunk of the tree) or within 10 meters of a Natural Stand (as measured from the boundary of the stand closest to the work activities). The Tree Preservation Guidelines must be followed when applying for your Tree Permit to ensure you have met the necessary requirements to preserve and protect City trees.

¹ Work means construction, demolition, excavation or laydown activities or vehicular access (other than on roads, driveways, improved trails).

No work is to begin until a Tree Preservation or Tree Protection Plan has been approved and a Tree Permit has been issued by a City of Edmonton urban forester (CoE urban forester).

Unsure if you need to follow these guidelines for your project?

Call 311 or email treepreservation@edmonton.ca to forward questions to the Urban Forestry team.

What Needs to be Done Before Work Begins?

The first step will be to apply for a Tree Permit. Please visit the [website](#) to view the Tree Permit process. The Tree Permit submission must include a completed online application form, and either a Tree Preservation Plan or a Tree Protection Plan. The following information explains when a Tree Preservation Plan or a Tree Protection Plan is required.

When work activities include ground excavation or grade changes within 5 metres of Boulevard and Open Space Tree(s) or within 10 metres of Natural Stand, **a Tree Preservation Plan** must be submitted with the online Tree Permit Application Form for review and approval by the CoE urban forester. The Tree Preservation Plan must contain critical details about site conditions, work and recommendations and actions that will take place onsite prior to, during and after work to conserve and protect City trees from damage, impacts or loss. This Plan must be written or reviewed and signed by a person with an approved professional designation including, but not limited to, ISA Certified Arborist, Consulting Arborist, Landscape Architect or a professional designation in a related field in Forestry, Horticulture, or Agriculture.

When work activities are limited to a temporary crossing or a laydown area within 5 metres of Boulevard and Open Space tree(s) or within 10 metres of Natural Stand, **a Tree Protection Plan** must be submitted with the online Tree Permit Application Form for review and approval by a CoE Urban Forester. The Tree Protection Plan must address details such as minimum protection distance required around trees, installation of physical protection measures for trees and their root zones, access points, property lines and expected timelines. This Plan must be written and signed by the applicant or their designate.

Tree Preservation Plan

Tree Preservation Plans **must** be approved by the CoE urban forester and any pre-work mitigation onsite must be scheduled and in place **prior** to work commencing.

Tree Preservation Plans must include:

1. All documentation submitted in accordance with the [City of Edmonton's Trees and Construction Details](#).
2. Reference to a development permit number or other permit/zoning change request or POSSE number (if applicable).
3. Name, address and telephone number of the landowner or site representative (include the name, address, and telephone number of the applicant if different from the landowner).Name, contact information and

certification number of the approved professional writing or reviewing and signing the Tree Preservation Plans.

4. Legal site address of work site and any relevant zoning details, if required.
5. Project timelines for all phases of work including start and end dates. The dates should also reflect the timelines for removal of protection fencing after the project is completed.
6. A site plan with the following information (including dimensions):
 - a. Existing site conditions such as compaction, any existing tree or root damage, drainage issues etc.
 - b. Identification of City trees and the species within 5 metres of the proposed work site footprint (including access points).
 - c. Location of all trees (including private) that may be impacted due to work activities or potential changes in drainage.
 - d. Distance of City trees from proposed work.
 - e. Tree protection zone and tree protection plan details.
 - f. Details of proposed work activities onsite, including any proposed underground utilities being installed and method of installation.
 - g. Any proposed work activities that must take place within the tree protection zone of any City trees (include an explanation of why work cannot occur elsewhere).
 - h. Proposed laydown or stockpile locations.
 - i. Property lines identified on the site plan.
 - j. Existing infrastructure including sidewalks and other hardscape surfaces if applicable.
 - k. Site grading and any proposed changes.
 - l. Ground excavation details (depth, location and limits).
 - m. North arrow and legend.
 - n. Access routes and proposed construction or demolition, parking and unloading areas. Include soil compaction mitigation used.

Please note: Some listed items to include in the site plan may not apply to your project. When submitting your Tree Preservation Plans, include all applicable details. If additional information is required upon receipt, the CoE urban forester will contact you. If there are any changes to the project that affect the Tree Preservation Plan please contact the CoE urban forester for a review on site.

For Boulevard and Open Space Trees:

An inventory, assessment and mitigation plan of Boulevard and Open Space Trees adjacent to the work site. To find out more about Boulevard and Open Space Trees near your site visit [City of Edmonton Tree Map](#)². Details to include for each City tree:

- a. Diameter at breast height (DBH) measurement (centimetres).
- b. Tree species, common and scientific name (include variety).

² The [City of Edmonton Tree Map](#) may not include all City trees. Please ensure your property lines have been surveyed prior to any work. If you are unsure whether it is a City tree, call 311 to have your questions forwarded to the Urban Forestry team.

- c. [Condition rating](#) based on the *Guide for Plant Appraisal 9th Edition*.
- d. Tree height measurement (metres).
- e. Approximate crown spread (measured from tip to tip) (metres).
- f. Photos may be included to support the assigned condition rating of the tree(s) within 5 metres of proposed work before work commences.
- g. Proposed tree relocation or removal³. Tree removal will be considered when tree preservation is not possible. All tree removals will require approval from CoE urban forester in accordance with the [Live Tree Removal Guide](#).
- h. Proposed soil mitigation to prevent root damage/impacts.
- i. Proposed plan to minimize soil compaction or mitigate the effects of soil compaction.
- j. Proposed tree care treatments to take place during all phases of work (including but not limited to watering, pruning, air excavation, soil remediation, fertilization and root cutting).

For Natural Stands:

An inventory of City-owned Natural Stand (natural areas and naturalized sites) within 10 meters of the proposed work site. This includes tree species, average condition and how work activities may impact this area. A site map (aerial image preferred) should be submitted with the following information included:

- a. Direction of drainage and description of proximity to any water bodies
- b. Erosion and sedimentation measures or a note referencing another drawing, if required
- c. Environmental sensitivity and connectivity (including unique or rare species/landforms)
- d. Proposed tree removal. Tree removal is always a last resort and will require the CoE urban forester's approval. All tree removals are in accordance with the [Live Tree Removal Guide](#). If tree removal creates a new stand edge, additional details on the edge effects should be included.
- e. Proposed grade changes on or off the work site that may impact the natural stand.
- f. Proposed plan to minimize soil compaction or mitigate the effects of soil compaction and prevent root damage/impacts.
- g. Proposed tree care treatments to take place during all phases of work, including after work completion (including but not limited to planting, watering, pruning, air spading, root cutting).

Please note: The CoE urban forester may request additional details depending on the complexity of work activities near natural stand trees. For example, approved environmental impact assessments or site-specific natural areas management plans, or other City of Edmonton approved environmental details that were required by the City of Edmonton applicable bylaws or policies for the work activities on the lands.

Call **311**. Within 5 business days a CoE urban forester will contact you to guide you through the steps of submitting your Tree Preservation Plan.

³ All tree work will be completed by the City of Edmonton. Administrative fees and tree maintenance costs will apply.

Tree Protection Plan

Use the [City of Edmonton Tree Protection Detail](#) and [Tree Protection Plan Template](#) when developing your Tree Protection Plans.

All Tree Protection Plans **must** be submitted via the online Tree Permit Application to be reviewed and approved by a CoE urban forester.

All tree protection must be installed onsite as per the approved plan **prior to** work commencing.

Approval of Tree Preservation or Protection Plan

Submit your online application for a Tree Permit, including the Tree Preservation or Tree Protection Plan, **a minimum of two weeks ahead of your planned start date**. A CoE Urban Forester will contact you to work through the next steps of the process. Application processing times may vary depending on the complexity of the project, but can take between one to three weeks after submission.

Ensure all mitigation efforts and tree protections are in place prior to commencing the project work and throughout the duration of the project.

Administrative fees and costs of any tree maintenance required due as a result of the work and Tree Preservation or Tree Protection Plan details will apply. Your CoE urban forester will guide you through the billing process.

During Work and After Work Completion

The Tree Permit and approved Tree Preservation or Tree Protection Plan **must** be onsite at all times during the work. If your work plans change, contact the CoE urban forester or call 311. Initiating any work without obtaining a valid Tree Permit will be considered an offence under the Public Tree Bylaw 18825.

Ensure Tree Preservation or Tree Protection Plan details are being followed during and after the completion of work to avoid preventable tree damages. Failure to follow the plan may result in a minimum fine of \$1000 under the Public Tree Bylaw 18825. Furthermore, additional tree work may be required for remediation and will be at the expense of the project.

Trees make neighbourhoods more liveable and enjoyable for the community. By developing and implementing a Tree Preservation or Protection Plan, you are helping to ensure climate resilience and keeping our urban forest sustainable and healthy. It is critical that our trees are preserved and protected to ensure environmental, ecological and social benefits for future generations.

Tips for Successfully Working Around Trees

- ❖ The City of Edmonton's [website](#) has some great details about working around trees, and tree protection and preservation.
- ❖ Plan ahead! Depending on your project's complexities, it may take longer to review and approve your Tree Preservation or Protection Plan. Please be aware that any required tree maintenance that needs to be scheduled or coordinated by the City may take up to two to four weeks depending on the scope of your project. Send your plan well in advance of your projected work start date to avoid delays to your project plan.
- ❖ Please think of the below-ground root system of trees. Protection for roots is just as important as above-ground tree protection. No open trenches are permitted within the tree protection zone.
- ❖ When working in hardscape areas, your tree protection and preservation efforts may vary greatly from what you would plan for a boulevard or tree in an open space. Consider site conditions and develop unique solutions.
- ❖ The different phases (e.g., construction, landscaping, access routes) of your project may require different protection measures and tree care treatments. Please ensure these differences are captured within your Tree Preservation Plan.
- ❖ Please include as much detail as possible when submitting your Tree Preservation or Protection Plan. The CoE urban forester will contact you if more information is required.

Definitions

All defined terms in the [Corporate Tree Management and Tree Reserve Procedure](#) will have the same meaning when used in this guideline.

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