

## TREE CITY USA

*The Town of Summerville has been designated as a Tree City USA since 1981. The Tree City USA program is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters and the USDA Forest Service. Summerville has met the four standards to become a Tree City USA community: having a tree board or department, a tree care ordinance, a comprehensive community forestry program, and an Arbor Day observance and proclamation.*



## TOWN OF SUMMERVILLE

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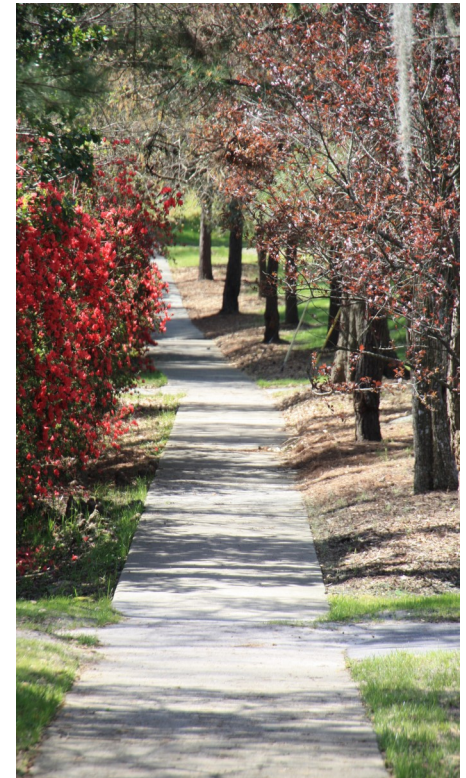


## Town of Summerville



## TREE ORDINANCE

### Tree Removal Permits FAQs



Tel: 843-998-3811

# Tree Ordinance and Tree Permits

The Town of Summerville's **Tree Protection Ordinance** is in place because the



citizens of the town and Town Council recognize the importance of preserving the natural landscape through the protection of existing trees. Trees provide a number of benefits including:

- Promote the public health, safety and general welfare
- Lessen air pollution
- Increase dust filtration
- Reduce noise and heat (minimize heating and cooling costs)
- Prevent soil erosion
- Improve surface drainage and minimize flooding
- Ensure that noise, glare and other distractions of movement in one area do not adversely affect activity within adjacent areas
- Beautify and enhance improved and undeveloped land
- Minimize the cost of construction and maintenance of drainage systems necessitated by the increased flow and diversion of surface waters.

Based on the above reasons, the intent of the Tree Protection Ordinance is to encourage the protection and replacement of trees consistent with the economic and healthful enjoyment of private property. The intent is not punitive, or to cause hardship to any individual, private firm or public agency which uses every care and diligence to protect trees within the town.

### When do I need a tree removal permit?

For properties in the Town limits that are already developed and/or not requiring a building permit, a tree removal permit is required when the property owner desires to remove any tree(s) of eight inches or greater diameter-at-breast-height (DBH).

DBH is the standard measure of tree size and is a tree trunk diameter in inches at a height of 4 1/2 feet above the ground.

For properties that are proposing to remove any trees of eight inches or greater DBH due to building or other construction, a site plan showing the proposed footprint of the building, swimming pool, etc. and the tree(s) to be removed needs to be submitted. If a permit is required for the construction, the tree removal permit will not be issued until the corresponding building permit is issued

### Where and how do I apply?

The property owner will apply for a tree removal permit by filling out a tree removal application and paying a permit fee of \$10 (plus \$2/tree if over 10 trees) on the Town's online Citizenserve portal, which can be accessed from the Town's website: [www.summervillesc.gov](http://www.summervillesc.gov), click on Forms and then Citizenserve portal. A separate permit application does not need to be filled out for each individual tree.

### Who looks at the tree(s) and how long will it take to get my permit approval?

The Town's Arborist reviews all tree removal permits that are submitted. Typically, they are reviewed within a couple of days to a week from when they are submitted. You should receive an email with the Tree Removal Permit Card when your tree removal permit is approved. If the tree is larger than 16 inches DBH, then the Tree Protection Board (TPB) must review the application. The TPB meets monthly on the Monday prior to the 2nd Wednesday of the month and there is an additional \$25 (plus \$5/tree if over 10 trees) fee for their review. If removal is not necessitated by death, disease, or damage of the tree (not caused by the property owner) then the tree will have to be mitigated at 50% for protected trees and 100% for grand trees.

### How do I pick up my permit and when does it expire?

The Town requires that the tree service you are hiring to remove the tree(s) be identified on the application or provided prior to emailing the Tree Removal Permit Card to both

the owner and the tree service. This is to ensure that they are a valid company that holds a business license with the Town. If the property owner will be removing the tree(s), that should be noted on the application and the Tree Removal Permit Card will be emailed to the property owner. The permit is valid for six months, but an extension can be requested if done before the permit expires.

### On what basis are tree(s) reviewed?

Trees are typically approved for removal if they meet one or more of the following criteria: diseased, dead, or dying; pose a safety hazard to nearby buildings, utility lines or pedestrian or vehicular traffic; prevent essential grade or all reasonable utility installations; prevent all reasonable site configurations; removal of trees is the only reasonable means by which building, zoning, subdivision, health, public safety, or other Town requirements can be met; are located in the building footprint and up to ten feet around the perimeter of the construction site of an approved building and related driveway parking area when every measure has been explored to preserve existing trees has failed; the lot is of such density with existing trees that the removal of certain protected trees is considered beneficial.

Having a Certified Arborist report on the condition and health of the tree(s) can also provide additional information that may not be available from an initial ground level inspection of the tree.

### Can a tree removal denial be appealed?

If the tree removal permit is denied by the Town's Arborist, then it can be appealed to the entire Tree Protection Board. Any applicant aggrieved by a decision of the entire TPB has the right to appeal the board's decision before the courts of the State of South Carolina as provided in S.C. Code, § 6-29-900. Applicants can also reapply for tree removal at a later date or if additional information on the health/condition of the tree is provided by a certified arborist.