

Arborist Report Guidelines for tree cutting permits

The [Tree Protection Bylaw \(No.9272\)](#) regulates the cutting or pruning of trees, prohibits tree damaging activities and sets requirements for replacement trees. Section 19 a), b), c), d) of the Bylaw identifies the circumstances where a tree cutting permit may be issued for the removal of a protected tree, other than a Significant Tree. These circumstances are:

- the tree is hazardous or is dead, damaged, diseased or in decline beyond expectation of recovery;
- the tree or roots of the tree are impairing, interfering with, or presents a risk to the operations of sewers, drains, waterlines, septic fields, electrical lines, poles or similar equipment and the impairment, interference or risk cannot be reduced or removed in any other way than the removal of the tree;
- the tree is located in close proximity to an existing building foundation wall and any impairment, interference or risk to the foundation wall(s) cannot be reduced or removed in any other way than the removal of the tree;
- if Qualified Arborist (as defined in the Bylaw) provides a written report that the tree by virtue of its size and species is inappropriate for its location and includes the reasons that the tree is deemed to be inappropriate for the location.

If a visual inspection by a Saanich Arboriculture Inspector does not lead the Inspector to conclude the tree warrants removal or alteration, Saanich may require the applicant to provide a tree report by a Qualified Arborist. The report must be sufficiently clear and comprehensive for a municipal arborist to make a decision on the application without having to clarify details. Providing sufficient information will help to provide a timely decision. Every arborist report must be typewritten and should include the following:

Title Page/Introduction

- Name of arborist and company, address, phone number, and email address
- ISA Certification number; Tree Risk Assessor Qualification
- Name and contact information of client, with email address if possible
- Civic address of the subject property
- Date and time of site visit
- Site conditions
- Signature of arborist

Description of tree(s) to include:

- Genus and species (common and Latin names)
- Trunk diameter (DBH) measured at 1.4m from grade, rounded to the nearest centimetre
- Tree location - for small projects, either by survey plan or overhead GIS map
- Tree tag number (if tags are required)
- Tree inventory in table format
- Site history and condition
- Risk rating - please provide the tree risk rating in your arborist report, with a description of potential targets
- Any other pertinent information

Condition (crown/trunk/roots) – may include:

- Health evaluation
- Structural integrity evaluation
- Live crown ratio (%)
- Fruiting bodies of wood decay pathogen observations
- Visible ground disturbances at the critical root zone
- Decay testing
- Pull testing
- Aerial inspection
- Strength loss calculations
- Lean (degree or %)

Photographs:

- Must be labelled with a description for each picture of what is being shown
- Entire tree image (if possible)
- Close up image of problem areas
- Entire site image showing trees being reviewed

Description of damage sustained, which may include but is not limited to:

- Improper pruning – number of limbs removed, height of excessive crown raising, final height of topped tree, number of scaffold limbs removed or stubbed.
- Mechanical damage to limbs or trunks – site of wound, severity (% of trunk circumference impacted), cause of physical damage, type of physical damage.
- Damage to tree roots – cause of damage, type of damage, % distance to excavation from trunk of tree, size of roots visible, number of buttress root flares damaged.
- Tree risk ratings with a description of how a recommendation for removal was attained.

The report may include recommendations for tree management that could include the following mitigation options:

- Pruning
- Altering
- Guying
- Propping
- Cable and bracing
- Retain and monitor
- Target management
- Removal
- Watering
- Aeration
- Drainage
- Fertilization
- Suspended slabs, if working the protected root zone
- Raised driveways or slabs on granular material (with plans)
- Wildlife tree habitat
- Leaf mulch from original or nearby forest floor
- Organic mulch
- Any other pertinent forms of mitigation

The Report should identify the tree replacement strategy for any Bylaw-protected trees that may be removed.

These guidelines are intended assist certified arborists prepare reports that allow Saanich staff to make decisions related to applications for Tree Cutting Permits as per Bylaw No.9272. Please refer to the Tree Protection Bylaw for more information: <http://www.saanich.ca/assets/Local-Government/Documents/Bylaws-and-Policies/tree-protection-bylaw-2014-no-9272.pdf>