



CITY OF  
**MORGAN HILL**

Development Services Department

17575 Peak Avenue  
Morgan Hill, CA 95037-4128  
(408) 778-6480  
[www.morganhill.ca.gov](http://www.morganhill.ca.gov)

## TREE REMOVAL & PRUNING PERMIT APPLICATION

An approved Tree Removal & Pruning Permit is required prior to the removal or pruning of any protected tree, significant tree, street tree, or community of trees pursuant to [Section 12.32.020 of the Municipal Code](#). An arborist report or letter of justification provided by a certified tree specialist is required unless otherwise specified by the Development Services Director.

### What is a Protected or Significant tree?

A **protected tree** is any native tree, significant tree, any tree designated for protecting during review and approval of a development project, public or street trees, or otherwise designated as significant status.

A “street tree” is a protected tree, regardless of size or species. Street trees are located within the public right-of-way, such as the landscape strip located next to a sidewalk, or within 5 feet of a public street/walkway where this is no sidewalk or landscape strip. See “Figure 1” below to help you understand between a street tree and private tree.

A **significant tree** is any tree measured above the ground with a diameter at breast height (DBH) of 13 inches or more for nonnative tree species, and a DBH of 6 inches or more for native tree species.

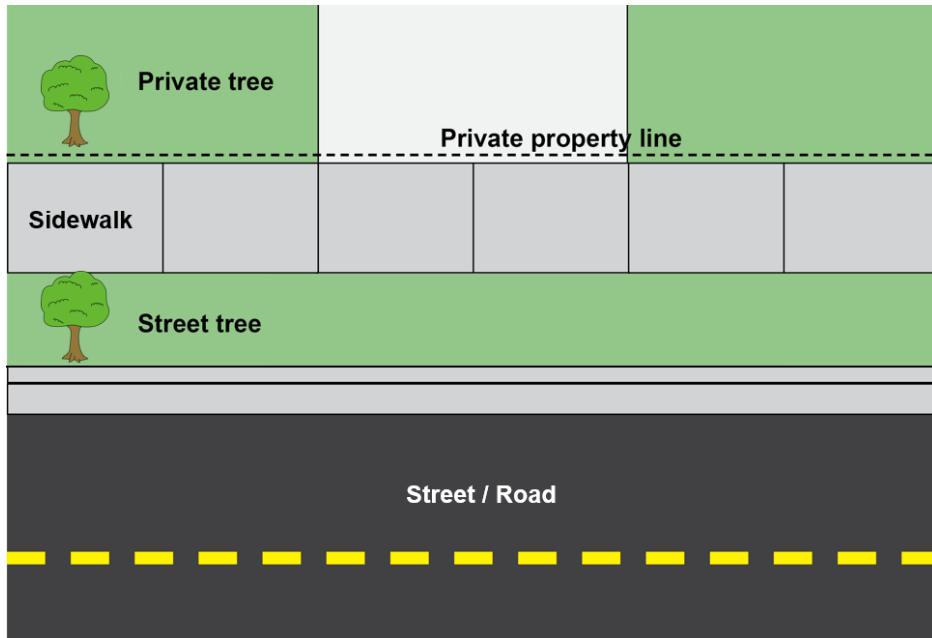


Figure 1. Street trees are located on the landscape strip next to a sidewalk, closest to the street or road, and 5 feet from the back of sidewalk.



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### **When is a Tree Removal Permit required?**

A permit is required to remove or prune protected and significant trees:

- “Pruning” means the selective removal or modification of 25% or more of the tree branches, roots, buds, or limbs in such a manner that impacts the structure of the tree.
- Protected species including, but are not limited to:
  - **Oaks (all types), California Bays, Madrones, Sycamores, and Alder trees.**
- Trees that are ‘significant trees,’ including:
  - Native tree species that measure 6 inches or more in diameter (DBH)
  - Nonnative tree species that measure 13 inches or more in diameter (DBH).
- Any of the above listed tree criteria located on public or private property, and as part of development projects.

### Emergency tree removals

- A tree may be removed immediately in case of emergencies (e.g., immediate removal is necessary for safety of life or property). The removal must be reported to the Planning Division within 5 days. Payment of a retroactive tree removal permit is required.

It is required to replace each tree with the same or similar native tree species unless otherwise determined by the Development Services Director.

### **When is a Tree Removal Permit *not* required?**

A permit is **not** required for trees that do not meet the size threshold as listed above or trimming of trees:

- Trimming means the removal of less than 25% of the canopy, including overgrown or obstructing branches from a tree to maintain the shape and health of the tree, and to protect nearby structures or utilities.

**If you are unsure if you need a Tree Removal Permit or have any questions, please contact the Planning Division:**

**Phone:** (408) 778-6480

**Email:** [planning@morganhill.ca.gov](mailto:planning@morganhill.ca.gov)



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**TREE REMOVAL & PRUNING PERMIT APPLICATION**

**How do I measure the diameter of a tree?**

The standard measurement for a tree trunk is “Diameter at Breast Height,” or “DBH.” The diameter of a tree trunk is measured 4.5 feet above ground at “breast height.”

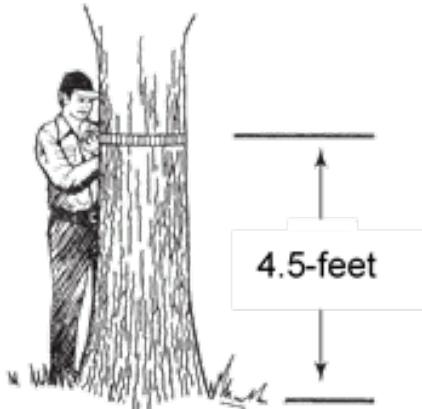


Figure 2. Measuring DBH 4.5 feet above ground.

To measure the single stem of a tree trunk, use a measuring tool such as a tape measure and measure 4.5 feet from the lowest visible part of the tree on the ground.

Make note of where you measured 4.5 feet above ground and wrap the measuring tape around the tree trunk at “breast height,” see Figure 2 (left).

Once you have measured the tree trunk, write down the size in inches. This size will be the “circumference” of the tree. Arborists use a diameter measuring tape, but it is a simple conversion from circumference to diameter using a regular measuring tape.

To convert from circumference (inches) to diameter (DBH), you will need to divide the circumference by “pi” (approximately 3.14). See the formula below:

$$\text{Diameter (DBH)} = \frac{\text{Circumference}}{3.14}$$

**Example:** If a tree has a circumference of 41 inches, dividing 41 by 3.14 gives you a diameter of approximately 13.1 inches

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**STEP 1: APPLICATION FILING REQUIREMENTS**

**AGENT OF THE OWNER MUST ATTACH A LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION FROM THE LEGAL OWNER**

I hereby acknowledge that I am familiar with the Morgan Hill Significant Tree Ordinance (Chapter 12.32 of the Municipal Code). I hereby grant access to my property to the City staff to gain information that applies to this permit.

I hereby acknowledge that I will properly post the Public Notice for Tree Removal Permit, as required, and agree to leave this notice up for ten (10) consecutive days. The notice will be provided by staff after review of the submitted application. The notice shall be posted in at least two conspicuous locations clearly visible to the public on or close to the property affected. No action shall be taken upon any application until the applicant has filed the affidavit and provided photos that such posting has been done.

Permittee agrees to hold harmless the City of Morgan Hill, its officers, agents, and employees from any liability or claims for damages on account of injury to any person, loss of life, or damages to property caused by or arising out of the activities authorized by this permit.

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PROPERTY OWNER

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MAILING ADDRESS

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PHONE

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EMAIL

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APPLICANT NAME

---

MAILING ADDRESS

---

PHONE

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EMAIL

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APPLICANT SIGNATURE

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DATE



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**STEP 1: APPLICATION FILING REQUIREMENTS**

PROPERTY ADDRESS / LOCATION:

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ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER (APN):

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The following information is required as part of your application submittal:

- Arborist Report or Letter of Justification from a certified tree professional
- Site Plan: The site plan can be a drawing or sketch and does not need to be drawn by a professional. The site plan must clearly indicate the property lines and location of all trees proposed for removal at the property. If applicable, label any structures, utilities, and sidewalks/streets.
- Photographs of the tree(s) requested for removal or pruning
- Payment of Tree Removal Permit fees:
  - The fee is \$148.80 for the first four (4) trees on a single application.
  - Each application shall require payment of an application fee.
  - Fees are subject to change annually. A 2.7% service fee applies to all credit card transactions.

**Please make checks payable to:**

City of Morgan Hill – Planning Division  
17575 Peak Avenue  
Morgan Hill, CA 95037



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**STEP 2: TREE INFORMATION**

**TREE #1**

TREE SPECIES:

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TREE HEIGHT:

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TREE DIAMETER (DBH):

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REQUEST TO REMOVE

REQUEST TO PRUNE

LOCATION OF TREE ON PROPERTY:

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REASON FOR REMOVAL:

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REQUIRED REPLACEMENT TREE SPECIES, SIZE (MINIMUM 15-GALLON), AND LOCATION (MUST BE PLANTED WITHIN 6 MONTHS FROM REMOVAL):

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**TREE #2**

TREE SPECIES:

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TREE HEIGHT:

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TREE DIAMETER (DBH):

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REQUEST TO REMOVE

REQUEST TO PRUNE

LOCATION OF TREE ON PROPERTY:

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REASON FOR REMOVAL:

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REQUIRED REPLACEMENT TREE SPECIES, SIZE (MINIMUM 15-GALLON), AND LOCATION (MUST BE PLANTED WITHIN 6 MONTHS FROM REMOVAL):

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**STEP 2: TREE INFORMATION**

**TREE #3**

TREE SPECIES:

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TREE HEIGHT:

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TREE DIAMETER (DBH):

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REQUEST TO REMOVE

REQUEST TO PRUNE

LOCATION OF TREE ON PROPERTY:

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REASON FOR REMOVAL:

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REQUIRED REPLACEMENT TREE SPECIES, SIZE (MINIMUM 15-GALLON), AND LOCATION (MUST BE PLANTED WITHIN 6 MONTHS FROM REMOVAL):

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**TREE #4**

TREE SPECIES:

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TREE HEIGHT:

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TREE DIAMETER (DBH):

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REQUEST TO REMOVE

REQUEST TO PRUNE

LOCATION OF TREE ON PROPERTY:

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REASON FOR REMOVAL:

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REQUIRED REPLACEMENT TREE SPECIES, SIZE (MINIMUM 15-GALLON), AND LOCATION (MUST BE PLANTED WITHIN 6 MONTHS FROM REMOVAL):

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