

Seattle Permits

— part of a multi-departmental City of Seattle series on getting a permit

SDCI Tree Service Provider Registry

Updated July 31, 2023

This Tip provides information about the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) Tree Service Provider Registry and how to register your business.

All tree service providers are required to be registered to conduct commercial tree work in Seattle. Property owners are required to use registered tree service providers for commercial tree work.

SDCI's Tree Service Provider Registry is accessible to the public so that owners, residents, and neighbors can be assured a registered company knowledgeable with tree regulations and best practices is completing work in their neighborhood.

What is the SDCI Tree Service Provider Registry?

SDCI maintains a Tree Service Provider Registry (registry) of all companies eligible to conduct commercial tree work on private property in the city of Seattle. Commercial tree work is defined in the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) [25.11.130](#) as any of the following actions conducted in the city of Seattle in exchange for financial compensation:

- **Reportable work:** The removal of live branches 4 inches in diameter or greater, pruning or removal of live roots 2 inches in diameter or greater, or removal of live branches constituting 25 percent or more of a tree's foliage-bearing area. Pruning of trees cultivated for fruit production and maintenance of hedges is not reportable work.
- **Removal of any Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 tree** (trees 6 inches or greater in diameter at standard height (DSH)):
 - "Tier 1 tree" means a heritage tree that is a tree or group of trees given special designation by the

Heritage Tree Program, co-sponsored by Plant Amnesty and Seattle Department of Transportation.

- "Tier 2 tree" means any tree that is 24 inches DSH or greater, tree groves, each tree comprising a tree grove, and specific tree species below 24 inches DSH as provided by Director's Rule (DR) 7-2023.
- "Tier 3 tree" means any tree that is 12 inches DSH or greater but less than 24 inches DSH and is not defined as a Tier 1 or Tier 2 tree.
- "Tier 4 tree" means any tree that is 6 inches or greater DSH but less than 12 inches DSH and is not defined as a Tier 1 or Tier 2 tree.
- **Consulting Services:** The assessment of the health or hazard risk of any Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 tree.

Normal pruning and maintenance operations that do not meet the definition of reportable work are not commercial tree work.

Please note the City of Seattle has different requirements for providers who may evaluate, care for, remove, and plant trees on private property versus in the public rights-of-way. The SDCI Tree Service Provider Registry covers work on private property and is different from the SDOT tree service provider registry that regulates work in the public rights-of-way. **You must register on each one separately;** links to each may be found on our [Seattle Service Portal](#)

What are the responsibilities of a registered tree service provider?

The SDCI Tree Service Provider Registry is published on the [Tree Service Provider Directory](#). Tree service providers listed on the registry are committed to following the tree protection regulations found in [Tree Protection, SMC 25.11](#), related Director's Rules, and ANSI A-300 Standards (or subsequent standard). Receiving two notices of violation for two separate incidents will prevent tree service providers from being eligible to conduct commercial tree work on private property in Seattle for one year. Unregistered providers are also ineligible to conduct commercial tree work in Seattle.

www.seattle.gov/sdci



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All registered tree service providers are required to:

- Comply with public noticing requirements (See Tip 242D, [Tree Public Notice](#)).
- Comply with best practices applicable to the particular commercial tree work they are conducting.
- Attest to having knowledge of City codes applicable to commercial tree work.
- For commercial vehicles used by the registered tree service provider, (1) clearly display the tree service provider's City-issued registration number and (2) have the name of the business to which the vehicle is registered, and the business's phone number or email address permanently displayed on the left, right, and rear (where applicable) sides in letters no less than 2 inches in height.
- Renew the tree service provider registration annually.

When do I need to hire a registered tree service provider?

Property owners must hire a registered tree service provider to complete commercial tree work on private property in Seattle.

Any company you hire to complete commercial tree work must be registered with SDCI. For example, if tree removal is proposed, the company you hire to remove any Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 trees must be reg-

istered with SDCI. For more information on tree tiers, please see Tip 242B, [Tree Removal on Private Property](#).

Alternatively, if your project does not include commercial tree work, the company you hire does not need to be registered. For example, if your project is grinding an old stump, you do not need to hire a registered provider.

A list of active registered tree service providers can be found at our [Tree Service Provider Directory](#).

What are the enforcement and penalties?

If registered tree service providers have been issued two notices of violation (separate incidents) for removal of a Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 tree(s) they will be removed from the SDCI public registry for one year. This includes notices for violations of [Tree Protection, SMC 25.11](#), and [Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas, SMC 25.09](#). In addition, the tree service provider will need to pay all applicable fees associated with the violations. Following the one-year removal period, the tree service provider may apply to be added back to the registry.

Beginning January 1, 2024, any tree service provider that conducts commercial tree work without first registering with the City will be subject to penalties double the amount set by Director's Rule 10-2023 for a violation of [SMC 25.11.100](#). Violations of SMC 25.11.100 are subject to the fines and penalties as outlined in SMC 25.11.120 and DR 10-2023 or successor rule.

Work Requiring a Registered Tree Service Provider

Type of work	Requires registered tree service provider?
Removal of a Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 tree	Yes
Reportable Work on any tree	Yes
Removal of any Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 hazard tree	Yes
Reportable work on any hazard tree	Yes
Normal pruning and maintenance of any tree (i.e. not commercial tree work)	No
Removal of any Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 tree within an environmentally critical area (ECA)	Yes
Reportable work on any tree within an environmentally critical area (ECA)	Yes
Emergency work	Yes
Property owner doing any work on trees (i.e. not commercial tree work)	No
Assessment of health or hazard risk of a Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 tree	Yes
Assessment of health or hazard risk of a Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 tree within an Environmentally Critical Area (ECA)	Yes

How do I register my business?

Tree Service Providers can register with the SDCI Tree Service Provider Registry through the [Seattle Services Portal](#) account. If you do not already have a Seattle Services Portal account, you will need to create an account. Please note, this is a digital application; if you need assistance completing your application, please call us at (206) 233-5185 or contact us at sdci-trees@seattle.gov.

For assistance navigating the application process, please review the step-by-step instructions in [How to Apply for the Tree Service Registry](#). The application process will take 15-20 minutes to complete.

You will need the following documents and information to complete the registration process. As noted below, you will be asked to upload digital documentation as part of the application process.

- **Current City of Seattle Business License.** You will need to upload a copy of your license. Tip! Go to [File Local](#) to confirm that your license status is current before beginning the registration process.
- **Washington State L&I General Contractor number.** Tip! Go to [WA L&I](#) to confirm that your contractor registration is current before beginning the registration process.
- **Certificate of Insurance for General Liability insurance.** A current certificate of insurance with City of Seattle as the certificate holder with a minimum of \$1,000,000 in Commercial General Liability. The liability coverage must include an endorsement naming the City of Seattle as an additional insured on a primary and non-contributory basis for government authorization purposes. You will need to upload a copy of your general liability insurance and an endorsement listing the City of Seattle as an additional insured. (Please see section below for additional information).
- **International Society for Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist.** At least one International Society for Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist on staff or retainer is required. A good website to find a professional arborist and verify credentials is [Trees Are Good](#). You will need to upload a copy of the ISA card for all ISA certified arborists listed on the application. Please note that the card must include the credential holder's name, certification number, and expiration date. For arborists that intend to do hazard tree risk assessments or emergency actions the arborist must have a Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) credential.

How do I meet the insurance requirements?

All registered tree service providers are required to show proof of Commercial General Liability insurance coverage with a minimum of \$1,000,000 limit per occurrence and an additional insured endorsement. If your coverage expires within a year of registering with the SDCI Tree Service Provider Registry, your registration will be suspended until you submit proof of renewed coverage.

To provide proof of acceptable insurance coverage, you must submit two separate documents:

- Commercial General Liability policy certificate of insurance
- Insurance endorsement form naming the City of Seattle as an additional insured

Minimum Insurance Requirements

To help you obtain the acceptable documentation, please provide the following minimum insurance requirements to your insurance broker or agent.

- The Commercial General Liability policy must be written on an insurance industry standard form ISO CG 0001 or equivalent coverage form.
- The Commercial General Liability policy must have at least one million dollars (\$1,000,000) Each Occurrence Combined Single Limit Bodily Injury and Property Damage.
- The Commercial General Liability policy certificate should include:
 - The City of Seattle is "primary and non-contributory" additional insured.
 - The City of Seattle shall be given not less than thirty (30) days' notice of cancellation of the policy, except in the case of non-payment, then not less than ten (10) days' prior notice is required.
- The Commercial General Liability policy certificate holder should be identified as: **City of Seattle**, P.O. Box 94669 Seattle, WA 98124-4669
- The Commercial General Liability policy must include:
 - Premises Operations.
 - Products and Completed Operations.
 - Broad Form Property Damage Liability.
 - Personal Injury.

- Endorsement naming the City of Seattle as an additional insured for primary limits of liability. (See sample form at the end of this Tip.)
- The City of Seattle must be an additional insured with a CG 2012 (0509 or newer version preferred) or CG 2026 additional insured endorsement or an appropriate blanket additional insured endorsement or ISO CG 2012 equivalent. The additional insured endorsement must reflect the City's role as a governmental entity issuing a permit or authorization. This excludes the CG 2009, CG 2010, and CG 2033 forms, because the permit applicant isn't performing any work for the City. It also excludes blanket additional insured wordings that refer to written agreements or contracts, because permits and authorizations are not agreements or contracts.

In addition to the minimum General Commercial Liability insurance you are required to hold to be eligible for listing on the registry, it is good practice to also have Commercial Auto Liability insurance to cover accidents that may involve your commercial vehicles. If you have employees, it is good practice to carry Stop Gap or Employer's Liability coverage to cover your business from damages claimed during a worker's compensation suit.

Still need help?

The best way to contact our staff is via email at sdci-trees@seattle.gov or through SDCI's [Submit a Request form](#). To help route your request, indicate that you need help with "Permits, codes, zones, plans," then select "Land Use" as the type of help you need, and then select "Trees" in the description field. If necessary, we can set up a virtual meeting to discuss potential or actual projects.

Customers may also contact us at (206) 233-5185 if you have questions and/or need interpretation services (please be prepared to share your preferred language to help us locate the appropriate support).

Access to Information

THIS ENDORSEMENT CHANGES THE POLICY. PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY.

ADDITIONAL INSURED – STATE OR GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY OR SUBDIVISION OR POLITICAL SUBDIVISION – PERMITS OR AUTHORIZATIONS

This endorsement modifies insurance provided under the following:

COMMERCIAL GENERAL LIABILITY COVERAGE PART

SCHEDULE

State Or Governmental Agency Or Subdivision Or Political Subdivision:

Information required to complete this Schedule, if not shown above, will be shown in the Declarations.

A. Section II – Who Is An Insured is amended to include as an additional insured any state or governmental agency or subdivision or political subdivision shown in the Schedule, subject to the following provisions:

1. This insurance applies only with respect to operations performed by you or on your behalf for which the state or governmental agency or subdivision or political subdivision has issued a permit or authorization.

However:

- a. The insurance afforded to such additional insured only applies to the extent permitted by law; and
- b. If coverage provided to the additional insured is required by a contract or agreement, the insurance afforded to such additional insured will not be broader than that which you are required by the contract or agreement to provide for such additional insured.

2. This insurance does not apply to:

- a. "Bodily injury", "property damage" or "personal and advertising injury" arising out of operations performed for the federal government, state or municipality; or
- b. "Bodily injury" or "property damage" included within the "products-completed operations hazard".

- B. With respect to the insurance afforded to these additional insureds, the following is added to Section III – Limits Of Insurance:**

If coverage provided to the additional insured is required by a contract or agreement, the most we will pay on behalf of the additional insured is the amount of insurance:

1. Required by the contract or agreement; or
2. Available under the applicable Limits of Insurance shown in the Declarations;

whichever is less.

This endorsement shall not increase the applicable Limits of Insurance shown in the Declarations.

ADDITIONAL INSURED – DESIGNATED PERSON OR ORGANIZATION

SCHEDULE

Section II – Who Is An Insured is amended to include as an additional insured the person(s) or organization(s) shown in the Schedule, but only with respect to liability for "bodily injury", "property damage" or "personal and advertising injury" caused, in whole or in part, by your acts or omissions or the acts or omissions of those acting on your behalf:

- A.** In the performance of your ongoing operations; or
- B.** In connection with your premises owned by or rented to you.