Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections
sdci
Tip 242D
Seattle Permits
— part of a multi-departmental City of Seattle series on getting a permit

Tree Public Notice

Updated October 17, 2023

This Tip provides information about the tree public notice (notice) requirements in the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC 25.11) chapter for Tree Protection and guidance for how to create and post a notice. This notice is required in all zoning districts subject to Seattle's tree protection regulations. For commercial tree work that received a permit vested to tree requirements before April 3, 2023, you need to create your own notice, using the template included in this Tip, to post on-site three days before conducting the work.

What Is a Tree Public Notice?

Seattle's tree protection regulations (SMC 25.11 (**https://library.municode.com/wa/seattle/codes/municipal_code?nodeId=TIT25ENPRHIPR_CH25.11TRPR**)) include public noticing requirements for commercial tree work on private property. When certain commercial tree work is being conducted, a public notice is required to be available on the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspection (SDCI) website prior to the start of the tree work and is required to be posted on site while the tree work is being conducted.

The purpose of the public notice is to provide the public with specific information including the location and description of the proposed tree work, the name of the tree service provider, and any associated permit number.

A registered tree service provider is required to create a SDCI tree public notice using the Seattle Services Portal online public notice tool (**https://cosaccela.seattle.gov/**). Once created, the notice is automatically posted to SDCI's website. The notice must be on SDCI's public notice webpage (**https://cosaccela.seattle.gov/portal/Cap/CapHome.aspx?module=DPDPublicNotice&TabName=DPDPublicNotice**) for at least 3 business days prior to the start of reportable work and 6 business days prior to removal of any Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 tree (trees 6 inches or greater diameter at standard height (DSH)).

The tree public notice is for information only and there is no public comment period for the proposed work. Questions about the proposed work should be directed to the tree service provider. If you believe the proposed work does not comply with the Seattle tree protection regulations (SMC 25.11), contact the SDCI complaint line at (206) 615-0808.

There are no fees for the tree public notice. The tree protection regulations require that the tree public notice be posted "in a safe location at or adjacent to the commercial tree work site in a manner clearly visible from the public right-of-way" while the tree work is occurring and that it should remain on site for five days afterwards. It is a violation of the tree protection regulations to conduct commercial tree work without a tree public notice posted during work.

When is a Tree Public Notice Required?

Commercial tree work that requires a public notice includes:

- **Reportable work.** Reportable work is 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.** Removal of any Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 tree, except when the work meets the definition of emergency tree removal.
  - "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.

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- "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.

The following table will help you determine if a tree public notice is needed for the work proposed on your private property. SDCI authorization may be needed prior to work on trees.

Type of work	Public noticing required?
Removal of any 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 ECA	Yes
Emergency work	No
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	No
Assessment of health or hazard risk of a Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 tree within an Environmentally Critical Area (ECA)	No

Public Notice Requirements for Tree Work

Our online public notice tool incorporates all the required information for the notice. The tree public notice must:

- Indicate whether the tree(s) is classified as a Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 tree.
- Provide the tree service provider's registration information.
- Provide the permit number if a permit is required. If no permit is required, the tree service provider shall indicate that no permit is required.
- Include a brief description of the commercial tree work the registered tree service provider will be conducting.

You must post the notice in a safe location at or adjacent to the site while the commercial tree work is occurring. The notice must be clearly visible from the public right-of-way.

See Exhibit 1 for a sample tree public notice.

Note, tree public notice requirements are different for commercial tree work authorized by an approved SDCI permit that **vested prior to April 1, 2023**. For this permitted work you will need to create your own notice to post on-site for three days prior to conducting the commercial tree work. A template to help you create your own notice is provided at the end of this Tip (see Exhibit 2).

How to Create a Tree Public Notice

- Go to the Seattle Services Portal Trees webpage (**https://cosaccela.seattle.gov/portal/Customization/pages/trees.aspx**) and enter all required information to create your public notice.
- The Seattle Services Portal will automatically format your information into a public notice that will be emailed to you (and all contacts listed on your notice record).

What You'll Need:

- An active Seattle Services Portal (**https://cosaccela.seattle.gov/**) account.
- Work must be performed by a SDCI registered tree service provider. You will need to provide the registration number, which is available on the SDCI Registered Tree Service Provider directory (**www.seattle.gov/sdci/codes/codes-we-enforce-(a-z)/trees-and-codes/tree-service-provider-directory**).
- A permit may be required for tree work associated with a project, such as a construction or demolition project. If the tree work is part of your project proposal, you will need to provide the permit number.
- Tree-specific information, including species, type of work to be performed, trunk size at diameter standard height (DSH), location, and whether the tree(s) is classified as a Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 tree per Director's Rule 7-2023, Designation of Tier 2 Trees.

If you have questions regarding completing the notice form, please consult the step-by-step instructions on how to complete a tree public notice (**https://seattlegov.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/10150251474199-Tree-Public-Notice**).

LEGAL DISCLAIMER: *This Tip should not be used as a substitute for codes and regulations. The applicant is responsible for compliance with all code and rule requirements, whether or not described in this Tip.*

How to Post a Tree Public Notice

- Once you receive the email with the tree public notice attached, print it on 8.5" by 11" paper. The notice may be several pages.
- Place each page in a plastic sleeve to protect it from the rain and secure the pages together with a staple, sturdy clip, or binder ring.
- Select a location within one foot of the property line, on your private property, that is clearly visible, easy to read, and accessible from the street and/or sidewalk.
- Install your notice on a post, yard sign, sandwich board, or other sturdy object at least 1-2 feet above the ground.
- Post the notice on-site while the tree work is underway. Leave the notice posted for 5 days after the work is complete.
- Maintain your notice in good condition until the tree work is completed. Replace the notice if it is damaged, removed, or no longer readable due to graffiti or weather damage.
- It is your responsibility to document that you have followed the public notice requirements. Therefore, we recommend you take date and time stamped photos of your public notice each of the required number of days of posting from the same location in the street and/or sidewalk.

What Not to Do

- Don't add or remove any content that alters the SDCI template.
- Don't create your own notice content and project descriptions.
- Don't install your notice behind a fence, shrubs, or landscaping. Don't nail the notice to any trees or vegetation.
- Don't install your notice in an inaccessible location. For example: the sign is too tall or short, requires climbing, or is on private property only accessible through locked gates, or too far to read while standing on public property.
- Don't install the notice on public property.

Contact Us

The best way to contact our staff is via email at sdci-trees@seattle.gov or through SDCI's Submit a Request form (**https://sdci.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/requests/new?ticket_form_id=1500003356822**). 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

Links to SDCI Tips, Director's Rules, and the Seattle Municipal Code are available on our website at **www.seattle.gov/sdci**.

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Exhibit: Sample Tree Public Notice

Seattle Department of
Construction and Inspections

SDCI PUBLIC NOTICE OF TREE WORK

Instructions: Work may not begin prior to the Earliest Date of Proposed Work listed below.

This tree public notice shall be posted in a safe location at or adjacent to the commercial tree work in a manner clearly visible from the public right-of-way while the work is occurring as outlined in Seattle Municipal Code 25.11.095.C.1.c.

The notice should remain in place for 5 days after the work is completed.

SDCI Tree Public Notice Record Number: 002199-23TN

Earliest Date of Proposed Work: 07/31/2023

Address: 2415 25TH AVE W

The following tree work will occur:

	Tree Name	Trunk Size at DSH inches	Type of Work	Location	Tree Category
1	Horse Chestnut	11	Tree Removal	Side Yard	Tier 4
2	Japanese Maple	14	Reportable Work	Front Yard	Tier 3

Related SDCI Record Numbers (if applicable):

Work to be Completed by:
Tree Service Provider Business Name: TREESRUS
Tree Service Provider Registration Number: LIC-TSP-19328
Tree Service Provider Contact Info: 206-234-1111

The registered tree service provider agrees to follow all tree codes and standards SMC per 25.11.

Visit our website https://cosaccela.seattle.gov/portal/Customization/SEATTLE/Welcome.aspx and enter the registration and related permits numbers to find a copy of the registrations and/or related permits.

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Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections

SDCI PUBLIC NOTICE OF TREE WORK FOR PROJECTS VESTED PRIOR TO APRIL 3, 2023

Instructions: Work may not begin prior to the Earliest Date of Proposed Work listed below.

The notice must be posted at least 3 full business days in advance of the tree work.

This tree public notice shall be posted on-site in a safe location at or adjacent to the commercial tree work in a manner clearly visible from the public right-of-way as outlined in Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 25.11.095.C.1.

Earliest Date of Proposed Work:

Address:

The following work will occur:

	Tree Name	Trunk Size at DSH inches	Type of Work (Removal/Major Pruning)	Location (Side/Front/Rear Yard)	Exceptional Tree (Yes/No)
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Related SDCI Record Numbers (if required):

Work to be Completed by:

Tree Service Provider Business Name:

Tree Service Provider Registration Number:

Tree Service Provider Contact Info:

The registered tree service provider agrees to follow all tree codes and standards per SMC 25.11.

Visit our website Find Public Notices - Seattle Services Portal | Seattle.gov and enter the registration and related permit numbers to find a copy of other registrations and/or related permits.