

Town of Concord
Natural Resources Commission
141 Keyes Road
Concord, MA 01742

Tree Removal Guidelines

Generally, the main criterion considered by the Natural Resources Commission when reviewing requests for selective tree removal is whether the tree removal has a significant adverse impact on the bordering wetland, buffer zone, or riverfront area's ability to protect public and private water supplies, groundwater, wildlife habitat, fisheries, shellfish, and to prevent flooding, damage and pollution. The Commission permits tree removal when these environmental conditions will remain relatively stable or be improved. In order to ensure this, often the Commission may require the applicant to add plantings, remove invasive species and/or leave snags for wildlife.

The Commission is sensitive to the needs of a landowner to manage their property. Through good land stewardship, individual removal of trees usually does not pose any significant threat to resource areas and in some cases may present opportunities for improvement. However, removal of trees to create manicured lawn area or for other aesthetic purposes (e.g., enhance vistas) are not viewed favorably by the Commission.

Requests for tree removal are more highly scrutinized the closer they are to the resource areas. The levels of review, measured by feet from resource areas, are as follows:

- 0 feet- 25 feet - In accordance with the By-law, trees must be clearly diseased or dying and/or present a threat to legally placed structures. This is applied site wide, though it is the Commission's only consideration within this zone.
- 25 feet- 50 feet- The focus of the Commission's review is comprehensive and site wide – considering such factors as the number of trees to be removed comparatively, the composition of the understory, the presence of rare or endangered species, and slope of the site.
- 50 feet – 100 feet- The Commission's main considerations are concerned with soil conservation and potential threats to threatened and endangered species.

The Commission requires notification to the Natural Resources Director prior to removal so assistance can be provided to ensure that measures are taken to adequately preserve wetland resource areas. Selective tree removal of up to five trees, proposed for the safety of an existing structure, generally is permissible administratively and does not require a Notice of Intent or a Request for Determination of Approval filing with the Commission.

Adopted by the Natural Resources Commission on February 19, 2014