

## Langford's Tree Protection Bylaw (Bylaw No. 2117)

### FAQs - What You Need to Know.

The City of Langford controls the cutting of trees through Tree Protection Bylaws. 2117 and 2118, as well as through the Development Permit and/or rezoning process.

Prior to removing any tree or vegetation, property owners are strongly encouraged to contract the Planning Department to determine whether any portion of their property has been designated as a Development Permit Area, and how the general Tree Protection Bylaw may apply.

Langford's new Tree Protection Bylaw is intended to be an interim measure until a more comprehensive urban forest management plan is in place. The City is currently in the process of retaining a consultant to provide full public consultation to guide the formation of an overarching strategy.

Q. What areas of Langford does the Tree Protection apply to?

A. The City's Tree Protection Bylaw applies to ALL areas of Langford.

Q. Are there any exemptions to the Tree Bylaw?

A. Yes, the Tree Protection Bylaw does not apply to the following:

- A tree that is a hazard and the risk cannot be mitigated other than by cutting or removing the tree, or the tree is dead (both verified by a professional arborist)
- Trees that must be removed to support regular work done by identified utility operators such as BC Hydro or land surveyors
- Trees to be cut down by the City in relation to walkways and trails
- Trees authorized to be cut down in accordance with a Development Permit, Building Permit, or any other permit issued by the City
- Trees located on properties that are located within Development Permit Area, but which are excluded from the Development Permit Process

Q. I'm not in a Development Permit Area. How do I get a permit to cut down a tree on my property?

A. As the Tree Protection Bylaw is an interim measure, the City is not offering tree cutting permits. If the tree is less than 20cm in diameter measured 1.4 m from the ground, you may cut it down. If it is 20cm or greater in diameter (measured 1.4 m from the ground) you are prohibited from cutting the tree down (unless the above exemptions apply) and may be subject to fines if you do.

Q. Does the tree protection bylaw only apply to certain species of trees?

- B. No. But the bylaw is only concerned with trees that are at least 20 cm (7.8 inches) in diameter measured 1.4 m (55 inches) above the base of the tree.

Q. What if the tree is leaning over my house?

- A. The bylaw offers an exception for a "dangerous tree" - a tree identified by an arborist who has training in tree risk assessment as a tree which could reasonably be expected to present an imminent hazard to the safety of persons or to the public or to private property.

Q. My tree is about to fall on my house. What do I do?

- A. If the hazard of your tree has been confirmed by a qualified arborist, you may submit their report to City Hall by email to [planning@langford.ca](mailto:planning@langford.ca) and you will receive a written exception to the tree protection bylaw.

Q. Am I allowed to prune my trees?

- A. Yes. Provided you prune your tree in accordance with an arborist's best practices, including not removing more than 25% of the foliage or bud bearing branches or limbs, topping the tree, or doing anything that would cause the tree to die, you may prune your tree without need of any municipal approval.

Q. I have a Development Permit. Do I need a Tree Permit also?

- A. Again, there are no tree permits, only exceptions to the Tree Protection Bylaw. Trees authorized to be removed by a Development Permit or a Building Permit (or any other permit issued by the City) are exempt from the tree cutting bylaw.

Q. What are the penalties for the unauthorized removal of trees?

- A. Each tree which is cut contrary to the Bylaw is considered to be a separate offence. Violations can result in a ticket issuance of up to \$1,000 by Bylaw Enforcement Officers, or Council may seek financial compensation through the courts of up to \$10,000 per violation (or per tree).

Q. What authority does the City of Langford have to control tree removal and cutting on private property?

- A. The *Community Charter* and *Local Government Act*, along with the interim Tree Protection Bylaw, enable the City to regulate tree cutting and removal on private property.

Q. How much will it cost me to remove a hazard tree on my property?

- A. You will need to contact a certified arborist to receive a quote. The quote will include the cost of a written report prepared by the arborist stating the tree is a hazard and the risk cannot be mitigated other than by cutting or removing the tree (or is dead), as well as the cost of removal.

Q. A tree that's on City property (e.g. boulevard tree) looks diseased/dangerous/dying – who should I call?

A. Please contact the Parks Department directly to report diseased/dangerous/dying trees on public property, either by email: [parks@langford.ca](mailto:parks@langford.ca) or phone 250-478-7882.

Q. A tree on my property is interfering with power lines/utility works — who should I call?

A. It's the responsibility of property owners to maintain the trees and vegetation around the service wire (the line that carries electricity from the pole to your home). Please contact BC Hydro for questions.

Q. I'm concerned about trees that are being removed nearby — who can I call to confirm the property owners have a permit?

A. Please email [planning@langford.ca](mailto:planning@langford.ca) for questions or concerns related to tree cutting on private property. The Tree Protection Bylaw provides City staff with full authority to enter onto lands to inspect and investigate reports of unauthorized tree cutting.