



Guides for Homeowners

# Tree Preservation Guide

## Tree Removal Permit Requirements:

[Tree Removal Permit application](#)

Sketch or site plan of the property, showing:

- Property lines
- Lot size (acres or sq. feet)
- Location of house and any other structures
- Location, species, and diameter of all existing trees. See below for measurement instructions.
- Trees to be removed marked with an X.

See Page 2 for additional site plan information.

Photos of trees to be removed

For specimen tree removal, provide a statement from a registered Landscape Architect or Certified Arborist. Many tree removal companies also provide arborist services.

Business License and Certificate of Liability Insurance of contractor, or a Homeowner

Declaration Form if removing tree as homeowner

Permit fee (see fee schedule)

### What are Chamblee's residential tree requirements?

Chamblee has tree preservation regulations that affect all properties within the City. Residential properties are required to have trees with a combined diameter of at least 50 total inches per acre.

### When do I need a tree removal permit?

On already-developed single-family residential lots, a homeowner can remove up to five *non-specimen* trees per calendar year without a permit. However, if a homeowner wants to remove more trees or a *specimen tree* (including a specimen tree that is considered a *hazardous tree*), a permit is needed. Tree removal on multi-family residential property also requires a permit. Please contact us if you're not sure if a permit is needed.

### What is a specimen tree?

*Specimen trees* are those large enough to require extra protection. The minimum size needed to be a specimen tree depends on tree type:

- Hardwood (Examples: oak, poplar, sweetgum): 24" diameter or larger.
- Softwood (Examples: pine, cedar, cryptomeria): 30" diameter or larger.
- Understory (Examples: dogwood, redbud, sourwood): 4" diameter or larger.

If you're not sure whether a tree is a specimen tree, please contact the Development Department.

### How do I measure tree diameter (DBH)?

A tree's diameter is the distance straight across the tree through its center. This should be measured as *diameter at breast height*, or *DBH*. Use a tape measure or string to measure the number of inches around the outside of the tree 4.5 feet from the ground. Use a calculator to divide this number by 3.14 to find the DBH. More information on measuring DBH can be found on Page 2.

### What is a hazardous tree?

A tree "that poses a potential risk of damage or injury to a person or property due to the presence of some structural defect (such as decay)" is considered *hazardous*. While the City recognizes that hazardous trees can cause concern, a permit is needed to remove hazardous specimen trees.

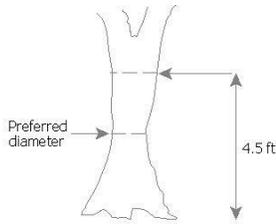
## Permitting Process

Submit an application and all required documents to the Planning and Development Department through the electronic permit portal here: <https://chamblee.portal.iworq.net/portalhome/chamblee>, or e-mail to [ChambleeDevelopment@chambleega.gov](mailto:ChambleeDevelopment@chambleega.gov), or in person at the Planning and Development Department office.

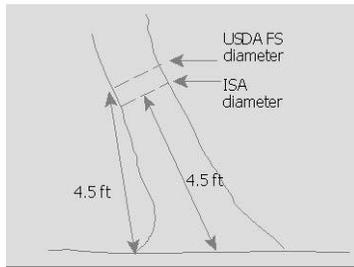
Permits are issued by the Development Department between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm Monday through Friday, and between 8:30 am and 12:30 pm on Friday. The typical review time for a tree removal permit application is one to three business days. Please contact us at 770-986-5010 if you have any questions.

### How to measure diameter at breast height (DBH)

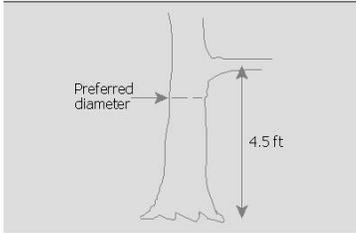
*Breast height* is 4.5 feet from the ground. A tree's diameter is its circumference (number of inches measured around the outside of the tree) divided by 3.14.



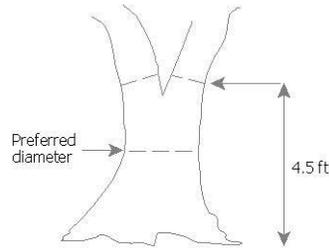
If the tree is tapered in a way where the diameter is smaller below the 4.5 ft mark, measure from the smallest point.



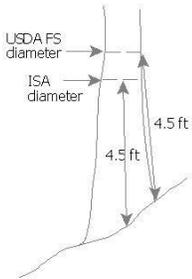
If the tree is leaning, measure 4.5 ft up the stem in the direction of the lean, or measure from the midpoint of the lean.



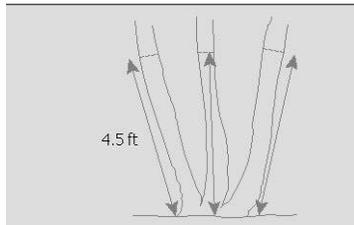
If the tree has branches or bumps that interfere with measurement at the 4.5 ft mark, measure from below the branch or bump.



If the tree forks below or near 4.5 ft, measure at the narrowest part of the main stem below the fork.

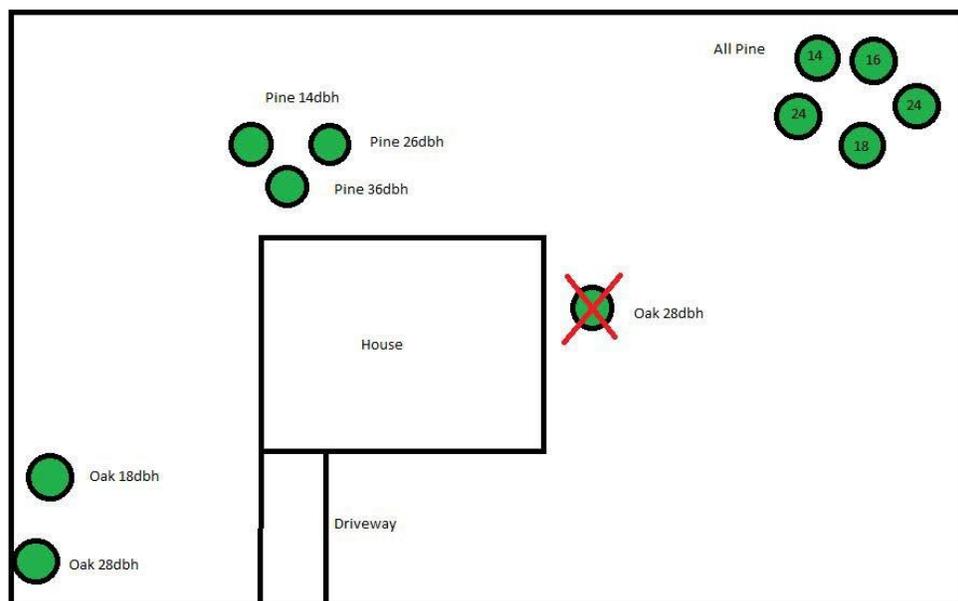


If the tree is growing on a slope, measure either 4.5 ft from the middle of the tree or measure from the top of the slope.



If the tree is split into several trunks, measure each trunk at 4.5 ft. The DBH is calculated as the square root of the sum of all trunk measurements.

### Example tree removal site plan: Use a survey, plat, aerial photo with property lines, or sketch.



Removing 1 specimen tree - Oak 28dbh  
 Retaining required 50dbh on property  
 Approximately 0.5 acres