

VILLAGE OF PINECREST

THE RULES FOR CUTTING, PRUNING AND REMOVING TREES

Do I need a permit to cut down a tree?

YES. Until recently, all tree-related permits were handled by DERM. Today, the Village of Pinecrest has the authority to issue tree removal and relocation permits. The application may be downloaded from the Village's web site at www.pinecrest-fl.gov or picked up at the Building and Planning Department located at 11551 South Dixie Highway, Pinecrest, Florida.

Why do you need a permit?

The maintenance of the existing tree canopy is a priority for the Village as it preserves the overall aesthetic values of Pinecrest and provides great benefit to the overall environment. The removal of a specimen tree (a tree with a diameter over 18 inches measured at four feet from the ground) destroys shade and animal habitat, negatively impacting the overall environment. However, in some cases it is necessary to remove a tree. For example, if the tree conflicts with the plans for a new home or addition, or if the tree has become a potential hazard that could cause safety concerns. Each application is carefully reviewed by staff to determine if the removal or relocation is warranted.

What is needed?

Fill out the application in full and submit two copies of a tree survey and/or a survey of your property that shows the location of the tree; provide the tree species, height, diameter and the size of canopy. If the Village determines that the tree may be removed, then a fee will be assessed and a new tree platting plan must be submitted in order to replace the lost canopy. For instance, if a property owner wanted to remove an 18-inch diameter oak tree with a canopy of 30 feet due to a new addition, the Village would require that the property owner replace 2,826 square feet of canopy on the same property. This is approximately equal to six, 14-foot shade trees. The calculation of the amount of replacement trees is based on a 4-to-1 ratio. When removing trees such as dead trees, Bishopwood, Laurel Fig, Carrotwood, Brazilian Pepper, Mahoe, Schefflera or Hong Kong Orchid trees, the Village requires that a property owner submit a tree removal permit application. However, the Village will not assess a permit fee. A complete list of exempt trees and the tree removal application may be obtained online at www.pinecrest-fl.gov.

Do I need a permit to trim a tree?

NO. However, proper tree trimming techniques must be adhered to in order to avoid severe fines. Property owners will be required to replace canopy lost by improper pruning. The term "hatrack" is used when a tree has been flat-cut, severing the leader or leaders, or simply when any branch three inches or greater is removed. It is illegal to hatrack a tree. When having your trees trimmed, make sure to select a qualified landscape arborist to trim your tree properly. A brochure on proper trimming techniques is available at the Village Hall and provides additional information on this subject.

The process of getting a tree permit is easy. If you plan to remove or trim a tree, please take the time to call Village staff to ensure that your plans comply with applicable rules. This will help the Village reduce the illegal removal of trees and preserve the environment for future generations.

For more information, contact the Planning Division via e-mail at building@pinecrest-fl.gov or at Village Hall – (305) 234-2121.