

Tree Removal/Tree Work Guidance Document

If you are an Andover property owner and you wish to remove a tree (or trees) on your property, this document is designed to help guide you as you consider your options.

You are welcome to call the Andover Conservation Department – (978) 623 8630 – or email (CDPConservation@andoverma.us) for advice prior to proceeding with the steps outlined below.



Trees – both living and dead – provide critical functions and values for the natural environment and wildlife. They also provide many services for human interests (stormwater retention, soil/bank stabilization, shading, air quality improvement, visual appeal, etc.).

*****Despite the many positive attributes of trees, both the Andover Conservation Department and the Andover Conservation Commission fully recognize that trees can be a significant danger to life and property. *****

The intent of this document is to provide guidance to property owners/tree removal proponents so that Andover Conservation Department Staff can assist you.

Generally, the Andover Conservation Department is focused on either wetlands, wetland buffer zones, or Town-owned lands that are maintained as open space. Per state wetland protection regulations (the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act) and/or the local wetland regulations (the Andover Wetlands Protection By-law), trees within the boundaries of a wetland or within a wetland buffer zone (100 feet of a wetland or 200 feet of a river/perennial stream), may require permission from the Andover Conservation Department and/or the Andover Conservation Commission for removal.

More information about wetlands, wetlands permitting, and wetland regulations is available on the Andover Conservation Wetland Permitting Information and Application Materials webpage here:

[Wetland Permitting Information and Application Materials](#)

NOTE: If a tree (or trees) are located within a wetland or the corresponding buffer zones outlined above, the property owner/tree removal proponent should follow the guidance outlined in this document and consult with the Andover Conservation Department prior to any tree work being done. The opinion of qualified tree removal companies and/or a Certified Arborist may also be necessary. If a tree is outside of these wetland or

buffer zone areas, or is not on Town of Andover land, the Andover Conservation Department does not need to be contacted about proposed tree work.

Tree Removal Guidance for Property Owners/Tree Removal Proponents

Any person wishing to remove a tree (or trees) within wetlands or buffer zones shall follow the following steps:

- 1) If you believe your property contains wetlands, consult the Andover GIS Viewer website and type in your address. Maps may also be printed from this website. This Andover GIS Viewer website is available here: [Andover GIS Viewer](#)

A set of instructions on how to use the Andover GIS Viewer can be found here:

[How To Create a Map Site Plan with the Andover GIS Viewer](#)

Wetlands on the Andover GIS Viewer website are shown with a green hatched pattern. Please see the image below as a reference – wetlands are shown in green. The blue line in the middle of the wetland is a stream.



- 2) If the tree(s) you wish to remove are located within a wetland boundary, within 100 feet of a wetland, or within 200 feet of a perennial stream, please email the Andover Conservation Department (CDPConservation@andoverma.us) with the following information:

- A) Your name, address, phone number, and email address.
- B) The number and size of the trees.
- C) The type/species of trees, if known.
- D) The location of the trees on the property and proximity to structures, driveways, roadways, or other manmade objects.
- E) The reason for their intended removal.

F) Property ownership information. If the applicant/tree removal proponent is not the property owner, written permission from the property owner for tree removal is required.

G) Photographs showing the trees intended for removal. Mark the trees with brightly colored flagging or another visible material so that they are clearly visible in the photographs. An example picture showing trees marked with yellow flagging tape is below.



NOTE: Submitting this information provides permission for Andover Conservation Staff to access the property to view the tree(s) intended for removal.

NOTE: Tree removal requests providing this information in paper form may also be submitted in person or mailed to the Andover Conservation Department, 36 Bartlet Street, Andover MA 01810.

Follow-Up from Andover Conservation Department Staff

Following review of the information provided above, and a potential site visit to view the tree(s), Andover Conservation Staff will follow up with the property owner/tree removal proponents with one of the following potential options:

1) Grant permission for removal of the tree(s). Permission is often granted with conditions such as leaving the stump(s) in place, no heavy equipment to be used in the wetland or area, any slash/wood chips shall be brought offsite, etc.

Permission for minor tree work (such as removal of limbs over the roof of a structure) or tree removal outside of wetlands/wetland buffer zones may be granted immediately by phone or email as well.

- 2) Recommend that the property owner file for a permit to receive permission from the Andover Conservation Commission for tree removal.
- 3) Deny tree removal based on wetland impacts, long distances from human objects/interests, etc. For example: While a dead or dying tree in a wetland may be deemed to be unsightly by a property owner, if that tree is not a danger to human life or property, then the Andover Conservation Department may not grant approval for its removal or may recommend that the property owner file for a permit from the Andover Conservation Commission.
- 4) Recommend that the property owner consult with a Certified Arborist or tree removal company. Professionals in these fields can provide expert advice. There are many tree removal companies in the Andover area who remove hazard trees and perform all kinds of tree-related work. These professionals are the real experts in this field, and information and options provided by Andover Conservation Staff are simply advisory in nature. For expert advice and opinions – especially about potentially hazardous trees - consult with a tree removal company and/or a Certified Arborist. For these professionals, Andover Conservation Staff cannot make any recommendations on whom a property owner may hire.
- 5) For trees located on Town land, the Conservation Department and the Department of Public Works (DPW) will evaluate potential hazard trees that have been brought to our attention and the necessity of its removal. Staff from these departments will make a final determination of the potentially hazardous condition of the tree(s) and when/how/if tree work is needed on Town land.
- 6) Site-specific circumstances may warrant other advice or actions.

Further Information/Points of Interest

- 1) If a tree (or trees) is deemed to be a hazard and the tree is located on Town of Andover (Town) land, the Town may be responsible for its removal. The Town has certified tree removal personnel and arborists on Staff with the DPW who assist with removal of such trees on Town land. If a property owner believes that a hazardous tree is on Town land, please follow the Tree Removal Guidance as outlined above. The Conservation Department will consult with DPW if needed once property ownership around the tree is identified.
- 2) For all tree removal activities on private land, the property owner and/or the tree removal contractor are responsible for all costs and liabilities associated with their tree removal. The property owner/tree removal proponent is solely responsible for retaining a tree removal contractor. The Andover Conservation Department is unable to make recommendations on tree removal contractors.
- 3) Tree removal permission granted by the Andover Conservation Department or the Andover Conservation Commission does not relieve the property owner/tree removal proponent of compliance with any other regulations, statutes, or ordinances that may apply.