



Village of Downers Grove - 801 Northlawn - Downers Grove, IL - 60515 - 630.434.3300

TREES AND SHRUBS

24-1. Purpose.

The purpose of this ordinance is to provide for the proper establishment of new trees, the protection and maintenance of existing trees and the timely removal of hazardous or infectious diseased trees on both public and private property. It is further intended to balance the property rights of individual property owners with those of the overall health, safety and welfare interests of the Village. Trees enhance and preserve the air quality of the Village through the filtering effect of trees on air pollutants, reduce noise within the Village through the baffle and barrier effect of trees on the spread of noise, reduce topsoil erosion through the soil retention effect of tree roots, reduce energy consumption through the wind break and shade effects, provide nesting areas for birds and other wildlife which in turn assist in the control of insects, reduce storm water runoff and the costs associated therewith, replenish ground water supplies and protect and increase property values. (R.O. 1925, § 204.)

24-2. Authority/Determination of appropriate trees and shrubs.

The Village Forester shall determine appropriate tree and shrub species, sizes, planting locations, and spacing distances for all plantings in the right-of-way of any street or alley and on all property owned or maintained by the Village. The Village Forester, as an entity of the Village's Public Works Department, shall have the power to promulgate and enforce rules, regulations and specifications concerning the planting, pruning, removal, spraying, maintenance and protection of trees and shrubs upon the right-of-way of any street or alley and upon all property owned or maintained by the Village.. (R.O. 1925, § 206.)

24-3. Tree Removal Permit.

A tree removal permit shall be required for the removal of any tree on Village owned or maintained land. Any permit authorizing removal may be subject to such conditions as the Director of Public Works or his designee may deem necessary or appropriate to minimize damage to other trees or vegetation on a site, and may include the installation of protective fencing.

(a) *Tree Removal Application.* The application for tree removal permit shall contain:

- (1) Name and address of applicant;
- (2) Commonly known address for the property where the tree sought to be removed is located;
- (3) A written statement indicating the reason for removal of the tree(s);
- (4) A general description of the tree(s) to be removed, including species and size; and
- (5) Name and address of the contractor or other person who is proposed as having responsibility for the tree removal.
- (6) Provide two (2) copies of the plans and specifications showing the work to be completed; and
- (7) Provide plans for tree protection of other trees in the immediate area.

(b) *Fees for Tree Removal Permit.* A tree removal permit fee shall be based upon the appraised value of each tree to be removed. The appraisal values shall be determined by the Village Forester using the most current edition of the Guide for Plant Appraisal prepared by the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers, which is edited, published and copyrighted by the International Society of Arboriculture. Various factors used in the tree value calculations for northern Illinois shall be obtained from the most current edition of the Species Ratings and Appraisal Factors for Illinois prepared by the Illinois Arborist Association.

- (1) In the event a tree removal permit is sought in connection with work where no building permit is required, but a right-of-way

permit may be required, there shall be no charge for such tree removal permit other than the appraised tree value. There are, however, costs associated with a right-of-way permit in Chapter 19.

(c) *Basis for Tree Removal Permit Approval.* The Public Works Department may approve an application for a tree removal permit under one or more of the following circumstances:

- (1) the tree is dead or dying;
- (2) the tree is diseased;
- (3) the tree is damaged or injured to the extent that it is likely to die or become diseased, or that it constitutes a hazard to persons or property;
- (4) removal of the tree is consistent with good forestry practices;
- (5) such other reason as the Village Forester deems appropriate.

(R.O. 1925, § 207.)

24-4. General Provisions..

Unless authorized by the Village, it shall be unlawful:

- (a) For any person or entity to remove any tree on Village owned or maintained land without having obtained a tree removal permit.
- (b) For any entity or person to plant, prune, remove, destroy, break, cut, deface, or in any way cause the demise, damage, injure or interfere with any tree, shrub or vegetation in any right-of-way of any street or alley or on any property owned or maintained by the Village, unless authorized by a valid permit. Any unauthorized plantings may be removed at the discretion of the Village Forester.
- (c) For any entity or person to deposit, place, store or maintain upon the ground in the right-of-way of any street or alley or on any property owned or maintained by the Village, any stone, cement or other material which shall impede free passage of water and air to the roots of the tree within the Critical Root Zone, defined in Section 24-7.
- (d) For any entity or person owning, maintaining or operating any gas pipes or mains laid beneath the surface of any parkway in the Village, to permit any leak to occur in such pipes. In the event that a leak exists or occurs in any pipe or main, the person owning or operating such defective pipe or main shall repair the same immediately and stop such leak in a manner so as to prevent a recurrence of the same after receiving notice from the Public Works Department of the Village calling the attention of such person to the fact that such leak exists or has occurred. Such person shall, promptly and in any event within five days after the receipt of such notice, stop such leak in a manner so as to prevent a recurrence thereof.
- (e) For any entity or person to attach any rope, wire, electric wire, insulator or any other electric device for holding electric wire to any tree now or hereafter growing on any property owned or maintained by the Village. Exceptions may include seasonal holiday lights, permanent cable and bracing systems, and lighting protection systems. Every entity or person having any wire charged with electricity shall, whenever practicable, securely fasten the same so that such wire shall not come in contact with any tree in any street or alley in the Village. When it becomes necessary to prune branches of trees in any right of way of any street or alley or any property owned or maintained by the Village for the benefit of any person running wire through such trees, the pruning shall be done consistent with the most currently accepted arboricultural practices at the expense of the person owning the wires.
- (f) It shall be unlawful for any person owning or controlling property in the Village to permit the growth of any tree or shrub in such manner as to (1) obstruct the reflection of street lights, (2) obstruct the view by motor vehicle operators of any traffic control device within the public right-of-way, (3) obstruct or interfere with the passage of persons or vehicles on the streets or sidewalks of the Village, or (4) create a dangerous condition for persons or property on public streets, sidewalks or other public property including, but not limited to, any tree or shrub or part thereof which is likely to fall on or across any public property. For the purposes of this section, "traffic control device" shall include, but not be limited to, any sign, signal, or opticom equipment, placed or maintained by the Village to regulate, warn or guide traffic. Any person violating this section shall be required to prune or remove any such tree or shrub so that it will not create such an obstruction.

(1) When any person owning or controlling property in the Village fails to prune or remove any tree or shrub which is growing in such manner as to violate Section 24.4 (f) of this Code, the Village Forester will notify the owner of the property of the violation. If the owner fails to prune or remove such tree or shrub within ten (10) days after receipt of notice, the Village Forester will cause such tree or shrub to be pruned or removed, and any reasonable expense incurred by the Village for the pruning or removal, including any administrative costs incurred to prune or remove the tree or shrub and in billing the owners for the cost, shall be a charge against the owner which may be recovered in an appropriate action at law. In addition to all other remedies provided by law, the Village shall have the right to place a lien on the property on which such tree or shrub was growing for the reasonable cost of the pruning or removal thereof. Such lien shall be superior to all other liens and encumbrances except tax liens. Within one hundred twenty (120) days after such cost is incurred, the Village shall cause to be filed a notice of lien in the office of the Recorder of Deeds of DuPage County. Such notice shall include the following information: (a) a description of the real estate sufficient for identification thereof; (b) the amount of money representing the cost and expense incurred or payable for the pruning or removal, including any administrative costs incurred in causing the pruning or removal and in billing the owner for the cost; (c) the date or dates which such cost and expense was incurred. The Village shall also provide a statement that the amount owed shall accrue interest at ten percent (10%) a year for each year the amount remains unpaid. Upon payment of the cost and expense by the owner of, or persons interested in, said real estate, after the notice of lien has been filed, the Village shall issue a release of such lien, which may be filed of record in said Recorder's office.

(g) For any entity or person to attach any sign, advertisement or notice to any public tree.

(R.O. 1925, § 211.)

24-5. Reserved.

24-6. Infectious Disease Control.

(a) Infectious, diseased trees declared public nuisance; duty of owner to cut trees.

Any live or dead tree on private property which is infected with an infectious disease, or which harbors vectors that transmit infectious disease (such as insects and other arthropods), is hereby declared to be a public nuisance injurious to the public health and welfare. Infectious disease includes, but is not limited to, Dutch Elm Disease, Elm Yellows, Oak Wilt, or Pine Wilt.

(b) Allowing infested trees to remain prohibited.

It shall be unlawful for any person owning or controlling any lot, tract or parcel of land to knowingly permit any and all trees, infected with infectious disease or vectors that transmit infectious disease, to remain on such property. It shall be the duty of such persons to see that all such trees are properly cut down and removed from the property. The failure to remove and destroy such trees shall constitute a violation of this section, and shall be punishable by fine or penalty in addition to such costs as may be incurred by the Village in enforcing and carrying out the provisions of this chapter.

(c) Inspection for infectious diseased trees.

In the event the Village Forester has reasonable cause to believe, either by virtue of its appearance or otherwise, that any tree located within such Village is or might be infected with infectious disease or is or might harbor vectors that transmit infectious disease, the Village Forester is hereby authorized and directed to enter on and upon any private or public property whereon such tree may be located for the purpose of inspecting such suspected tree, marking or identifying the tree, and removing therefrom samples or portions thereof so that same may be tested to establish whether or not such tree is in fact diseased.

(d) Notice to remove infectious diseased trees.

When any infectious live or dead tree is discovered by the Village Forester, the Village Forester will give a written notice, which may be served personally or sent by certified mail, to the person to whom was sent the tax bill for general taxes for the last preceding year on the property. Such notice shall identify the property, by common description, the tree or trees affected.

(e) Removal of infected trees by Village; cost of removal to be lien.

In the event that any such infectious live or dead diseased tree is not removed within thirty (30) days from the date of the delivery or sending of such notice, then the Village Forester shall enter upon such property with a licensed tree service and cut down and remove such tree and invoice the property owner(s) for the cost thereof. Within one hundred twenty (120) days thereafter the Village shall file in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds of the County, a notice of lien which shall include the following information: (a) a description of the real estate sufficient for identification thereof; (b) the amount of money representing the cost and expense

incurred or payable for the removal, including any administrative costs incurred in causing the removal and in billing the owner for the cost; (c) the date or dates on which such cost and expense was incurred. The Village shall also provide a statement that the amount owed shall accrue interest at ten percent (10%) a year for each year the amount remains unpaid. Upon payment of the cost and expense by the owner of, or persons interested in, said real estate, after the notice of lien has been filed, the Village shall issue a release of such lien, which may be filed of record in said recorder's office. (R.O. 1925, § 210.)

24-7. Prevention of Injury to Trees-Public Right-of-Way.

In the erection, alteration or repair of any building or structure, or the construction, installation, alteration or repair of any street, driveway, sidewalk, or utility, trees in the right-of-way or on any Village owned or maintained property shall be protected from damage or removal unless otherwise authorized by a permit issued by the Public Works Department pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 19. Suitable protection includes fencing which is four (4) feet high and secured to metal posts driven into the ground which are spaced no further than ten (10) feet apart. Tree crowns and trunks shall not suffer any branch or bark loss. Roots shall be protected from compaction, storage of materials, severing, regrading of the parkway or excavation within the Critical Root Zone. It shall be unlawful for any entity or person to sever roots, compact the soil, regrade the parkway or excavate within the critical root zone of any tree in any right-of-way of any street without a valid permit during the erection, alteration or repair of any building or structure, or the construction, installation, alteration or repair of any street, driveway, sidewalk or utility. The critical root zone is defined as the minimum volume of roots necessary for maintenance of tree health and stability, and shall be a rectangle around the tree trunk with the minimum dimensions listed in the table below:

Tree diameter 4.5 feet above ground	Width from street to property (minimum - curb to sidewalk)	Length along street (minimum)	Depth
0 - 12.0 inches	10 feet	10 feet	4 feet
12.1 - 24.0 inches	10 feet	20 feet	4 feet
24.1 or more inches	10 feet	30 feet	4 feet

Whenever possible, the entire parkway shall be fenced except where access has been permitted. Any factors that would cause any deviations from the table above shall be noted on the permit issued for work in the area and shall be approved by the Village Forester before the work begins or the permit is issued.

In addition to any fines that may be assessed for violation of this section, the person shall pay to the Village a sum equal to the value or partial value of the tree lost as a result of the violation. The value or partial value of the tree lost shall be as determined by the Village Forester using the most current edition of the Guide for Plant Appraisal prepared by the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers, and edited, published and copyrighted by the International Society of Arboriculture. Various factors used in the tree value calculations for northern Illinois shall be obtained from the most current edition of the Species Ratings and Appraisal Factors for Illinois prepared by the Illinois Arborist Association.

(R.O. 1925, § 209.)

24-8. Violations.

- (1) It shall be unlawful for any person or entity to fail to maintain the fence around the critical root zone, as defined above. Each day during which a violation continues or is permitted shall be construed as a separate and distinct offense.
- (2) Any entity or person who injures a public tree shall be held responsible for the costs of repairs, such as pruning or cabling, if the injured tree will not die as a result of such injuries. In cases where the tree has been damaged beyond repair and cannot remain in the public right-of-way, the entity or person responsible for the damage shall remove the tree and stump at their own costs, or if the tree is an immediate hazard, the entity or person shall pay the cost the Village incurs in its removal.
- (3) In addition to any fines that may be assessed for violation of this section, the person shall pay to the Village a sum equal to the value or partial value of the tree lost as a result of the violation or replacement of trees as provided below. The value or partial value of the tree lost shall be as determined by the Village Forester using the most current edition of the Guide for Plant Appraisal prepared by the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers, and edited, published and copyrighted by the International Society of Arboriculture. Various factors used in the tree value calculations for northern Illinois shall be obtained from the most current edition

of the Species Ratings and Appraisal Factors for Illinois prepared by the Illinois Arborist Association.

(4) Whoever violates this Code, in addition to any other fines, or fees, shall be subject to the following provisions:

(a) Fines:

1st Offense \$500

2nd Offense \$1,000

3rd and Subsequent Offense \$2,500

All violations that are committed by the same person or any firm controlled by such person shall be counted, regardless of whether or not the violations occur at the same time. Any finding or plea of guilty or plea of "no contest" upon a citation shall be deemed a violation.

(b) Replacement of each tree unlawfully removed under the following scheme:

Removed 10-12 inch diameter tree* Replace with 3 trees**

Removed 13-19 inch diameter tree* Replace with 4 trees**

Removed 20-25 inch diameter tree* Replace with 5 trees**

Removed 26-29 inch diameter tree* Replace with 6 trees**

Removed 30-35 inch diameter tree* Replace with 7 trees **

Removed 36 or greater inch diameter tree* Replace with 8 trees**

* Trunk size as measured at 4.5 feet above the established ground level.

** All replacement trees shall have a minimum trunk size of four (4) inches in diameter, as measured six (6) inches above the established ground level, upon installation.

In interpreting the above exchange rate, in the event of a fraction of an inch, if a fraction is equal to one-half (1/2) inch or greater, the higher full number shall be used.

The Village Forester shall approve species of any replacement tree. Any replacement tree shall be guaranteed by the violator for up to eighteen (18) months after planting. In the event a replacement tree dies or is in declining condition, the violator shall make a replacement of that dead or declining tree.

(c) Payment into the Village's tree planting fund in lieu of replacement.

In addition to the fines or fees described in section (a) above, but in lieu of replacement as set forth in section (b), any person or entity who unlawfully removes a tree may pay into the Village's tree planting fund the cost for replacement at a rate of one hundred dollars (\$100) per inch of trunk diameter of the tree that was destroyed or removed.

(d) In addition to any other applicable provisions, the Village may issue to any entity or person who violates any provision of this chapter an invoice as settlement of any violation. The invoice shall list the specific violations that occurred, the date or dates of a violation, the location of the violation and shall request payment of the invoice within thirty (30) days. In lieu of invoices, bonds issued for the work at a violation site may be forfeited should funds be sufficient to cover the tree values or fines. Upon failure to settle the violation, a complaint shall be filed in the Circuit Court for the damage and violation.

(R.O. 1925, § 208.)

24-9. Appeal.

Any applicant for a permit who received a notice of denial may file a written appeal with the Village Manager within ten (10) business days upon receipt of the decision. The written appeal shall set forth the reasons why the applicant believes the decision to deny the license should be reversed. The Village Manager shall respond to the appeal within fourteen (14) days, either affirming or reversing the decision to deny the permit. The decision of the Village Manager shall be the final administrative action of the Village with respect to the permit or application and shall be subject to the immediate appeal by the permittees or applicant to the Circuit Court. Such appeal to the Circuit Court shall be filed not later than thirty-five (35) days following receipt of the Village Manager's decision. Failure to timely file such appeal as provided herein shall render the Village Manager's decision final. (R.O. 1925, § 212.)

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