

NYC Tree Removal Permit Rules: When You Need DPR Approval in 2026

Quick reference guide by Dragonetti Green Leaf Tree Care NY

Street trees

Any tree in the sidewalk strip between curb and property line. City property. DPR permit required for all work.

Park trees

Any tree on Parks Department or other city-agency land. DPR permit required.

Private property trees (general rule)

Trees rooted entirely on private NYC residential property generally do NOT require a DPR permit for removal.

Private property exceptions

Landmarked sites, historic districts, SEQRA-reviewed development sites, deed-restricted properties, work needing sidewalk closure.

Street tree work — Path 1

Free city work order via 311. Queue: 12-36 months for non-urgent. Emergencies prioritized within days.

Street tree work — Path 2

Hire a DPR-licensed contractor who applies for the permit on your behalf. 2-6 week approval. You pay the contractor.

Penalties for unauthorized removal

\$7,000 to \$25,000+ per tree based on DBH. Plus replacement tree planting cost (~\$2,500). Contractor loses DPR license.

Common myths

Frontage ≠ ownership. Dead trees still need permits. Even minor pruning needs a permit. Boundary trees need both owners' consent.

Property line trees

Trunk straddling the line is shared. Both owners must agree in writing before any work.

Five boroughs

Same rules apply uniformly across Brooklyn, Queens, Bronx, Manhattan, Staten Island.

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