

Vegetation Removal Permit

Informational Guide

A permit is required for the removal of native vegetation and trees in accordance with the Tree Protection section of the [Lee County Land Development Code \(Chapter 14\)](#).

A Vegetation Removal Permit is required when clearing of trees for the following reasons:

Single family

For clearing trees or vegetation on single-family residential properties:

- 5 acres or more within unincorporated Lee County
- Over 2 acres on Pine Island
- [Barrier islands](#)

Multi family

When clearing trees from multi-family properties and common elements.

Commercial / industrial

For clearing trees or vegetation on commercial or industrial properties:

- Any new development must first obtain a Development Order (DO), and only after the DO is issued can a Vegetation Removal Permit be approved
- Landscaping updates, redevelopment of a site, or removal of trees that present a hazard to the property or its occupants require:
 - May require a Limited Review Development Order (LDO), and
 - Vegetation Removal Permit if native, protected, or required vegetation will be removed.

Development order

Any new development must first obtain a Development Order (DO), and only after the DO is issued can a Vegetation Removal Permit be approved

Agricultural

Land clearing from agriculturally zoned property for bona fide agricultural purposes must obtain a Notice of Clearing

- If an application to rezone a parcel is filed within three years from the date the most recent Notice of Clearing was issued, and the rezoning is granted, the applicable open space requirements of Chapter 10, [Lee County Land Development Code \(LDC\)](#),

Hazard trees

A Vegetation Removal Permit can be issued for the removal of any protected tree if the inspection finds one or more of the following conditions is present per LDC *Chapter 14, Article V, Section 14-412*:

Vegetation Removal Permit

Informational Guide

- Trees which pose a safety hazard to pedestrian or vehicular traffic or threaten to cause disruption to public utility services.
- Trees which pose a safety hazard to existing buildings or structures.
- Trees which prevent reasonable access to a lot or parcel so long as the proposed access point complies with all other county regulations.
- Diseased trees which are a hazard to people, buildings or other improvements on a lot or parcel or to other trees.
- Trees so weakened by age, storm, fire or other injury as to, in the opinion of the administrator, jeopardize the life and limb of persons or cause a hazard to property.
- Trees which prevent the lawful development of a lot or parcel or the physical use thereof.
- The administrator may require that a tree protected by this article be relocated on the same lot or parcel in lieu of removal.

Soil borings and wells

When clearing of trees or vegetation in association soil boring or well drilling activities.

Indigenous Maintenance

For existing developments with required preserve areas proposing to perform maintenance within the preserve areas including:

- Manual management in areas where plant communities cannot be maintained naturally by fire
- Protected species management activities
- Debris removal
- For more information regarding Indigenous Management Plans

Refer to the [Lee County Land Development Code \(Chapter 10-701\)](#)

Barrier Islands

Coastal Islands: Single-family and duplex lot owners must apply for a vegetation removal permit on the following coastal islands:

- Big Hickory
- Black Island
- Buck Key
- Captiva
- Cayo Costa
- Fort Myers Beach
- Gasparilla
- Greater Pine Island*
- Little Hickory Islands (Bonita Beach)
- Lover's Key Group of Islands
- North Captiva

* For Greater Pine Island only, a vegetation removal permit will be required only on parcels or lots zoned or used for residential purposes that are two acres in size or greater.

Single Family: [Land Development Code Section 14-377\(c\)\(1\) & \(2\)](#)

Vegetation Removal Permit

Informational Guide

There are two types of vegetation removal permit requirements for single-family and duplex lots on coastal islands. The first requires review and approval as part of the issuance of a building permit. The second is for clearing of a lot prior to any building permit review.

Please note:

- Removal of coconut palms and native trees requires a permit.
- No permit is required for the annual removal of five trees or less from any single-family lot that already has an existing single-family dwelling unit.
- Barricades that protect preserved vegetation are required.

Site Inspections: Staff must conduct a site inspection to verify the submitted site plan and to inspect barricades, if applicable. Staff must also review the site for protected plant and animal species. The applicant must provide staff with transportation if the lot is on an unbridged island.

How to Apply for a Vegetation Removal Permit

- **To apply for a Vegetation Removal Permit, please apply online using the [eConnect Citizen Access Portal](#).**
- **For access to general documents and application guides, visit the [Application & Information Center](#).**
- **If you have any questions, please contact Development Services staff at DCDVegetation@leegov.com.**

Helpful Resources

- [Protected Tree List \(Appendix E\)](#)