



# County of Ventura Tree Protection Ordinance Submittal Requirements for Tree Permits & Authorizations in the Coastal Zone

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency • Planning Division  
800 S. Victoria Ave., Ventura, CA 93009 • (805)654-2488 • [www.vcrma.org/tree-permits-and-the-tree-protection-ordinance](http://www.vcrma.org/tree-permits-and-the-tree-protection-ordinance)

Most alterations and removals of trees within the coastal zone are subject to the requirements of the Ventura County Tree Protection Ordinance (TPO). Approval to remove or alter a protected tree will only be granted under the circumstances outlined in the TPO. The requirements of the TPO in the Coastal Zoning Ordinance (CZO) are different from those in the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance. In the coastal zone, alterations to most trees require a tree permit, and *protected trees may not be removed for aesthetic or view reasons*. Table 1 below lists the types and sizes of trees subject to the TPO, and Figure 1 below illustrates how to measure the size (girth) of a protected tree.

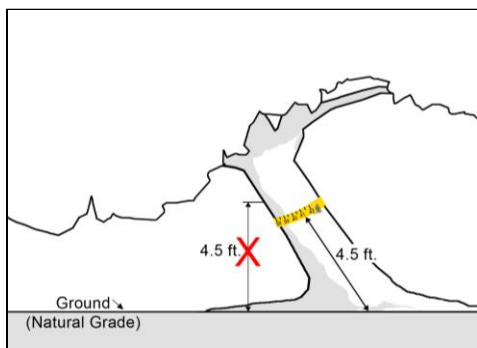
**Table 1: Protected Trees**

Species/Type	Girth (min. inches)
Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA)*	Any
Natives: Arroyo Willow, Big Cone Douglas Fir, Big Leaf Maple, Black Cottonwood, Fremont Cottonwood, California Ash, California Bay Laurel, California Juniper, Western Juniper, Catalina Ironwood, Santa Cruz Island Ironwood, Elderberry, Pacific madrone, Oak, Southern California Black Walnut, Sycamore, White Alder	3" single-trunk 6" multiple-trunk
Historic** (any species)	Any
Heritage (any species)	28" single-trunk 22" multiple-trunk

\*ESHA Tree – see the Tree Protection Regulations in the CZO (Sec. 8178-7.3.1) for definition of an ESHA tree.

\*\*Historic Tree - Identified as of historical or cultural significance (Sec. 8178-7.3.3).

**Figure 1: Measuring the Size of a Protected Tree**



Girth is the circumference of the trunk, generally measured at 4.5' above the ground. If the trunk is at an angle, the distance above the ground is measured along the trunk's centerline.

Except for a few exemptions (see below), the removal, alteration or encroachment into the tree protection zone (TPZ) of a protected tree requires the approval by the County. Depending on the type of proposed activity, and extent of the potential effects on a protected tree(s), one of the following three approval forms is required:

1. **Emergency Coastal Development Permit:** This form of approval can be obtained for emergency tree removal or alteration that is necessary to address an imminent hazard to life, health, property or essential public service. Permit applications shall be authorized in accordance with the regulations for Emergency Coastal Development Permits (CZO Sec. 8181-3.7).

2. Zoning Clearance (ministerial permit): A zoning clearance is required for the removal or alteration of a *non-native* or *non-native invasive tree* or the alteration of a protected tree that is adjacent to a public overhead utility line. A zoning clearance with inspection is required for development that encroaches less than 10 percent into a protected tree’s TPZ, or for pruning of less than 20 percent of the tree canopy.
3. Planned Development Permit (discretionary permit): A planned development permit is required to remove, alter, or transplant a protected tree unless the action is exempt from a permit or if it only requires a zoning clearance or emergency permit.

Table 2 below lists which of the above County approvals are required for various tree alteration activities and which activities in the coastal zone are exempt from tree permits. This table also outlines the application submittal requirements for each of these approvals.

If you have questions about the requirements of the Tree Protection Ordinance, contact the Planning Division’s tree protection planner at 805-654-2488 or go to the website at [www.vcrma.org/tree-permits-and-the-tree-protection-ordinance](http://www.vcrma.org/tree-permits-and-the-tree-protection-ordinance).

**Table 2: Submittal Requirements for Tree Permits & Authorizations**

No Approval Required (CZO Sec. 8178-7.5.3)	( CZO Sec. 8178-7.7.1)
<input type="checkbox"/> For commercial tree operations.	➔ Bird nesting survey if done during bird breeding and nesting season (Jan 1 to Sep 15).
<input type="checkbox"/> For minor tree alterations within the required fuel modification zone.	➔ Bird nesting survey if done during bird breeding and nesting season (Jan 1 to Sep 15).
<input type="checkbox"/> To remove dead or fallen tree or limb (restrictions apply if the tree is in ESHA).	➔ 1. Bird nesting survey if done during bird breeding and nesting season (Jan 1 to Sep 15). 2. Two to four colored photographs of affected tree. 3. Site sketch or plan.
Emergency Permit (CZO Sec. 8178-7.5.4)	(CZO Sec. 8181-3.7)
<input type="checkbox"/> For <b>emergencies</b> that demand immediate action to prevent or mitigate loss or damage to life or significant loss of property. (Sec. 8178-7.5.4)	➔ 1. Emergency permit applications shall be made in accordance with Emergency Coastal Development Permits. 2. Submit an application for a Planned Development Permit within 90 days following the issuance of the emergency permit.
Zoning Clearance (CZO Sec. 8178-7.5.2)	(CZO Sec. 8178-7.7.2)
The following activities require a zoning clearance (ministerial permit) under the CZO Tree Protection Ordinance.	<b>General requirements</b> for most zoning clearance permits: 1. Coastal Zone Ministerial Tree Permit Application (Tree Doc CZ-M) 2. Two to four color photos of tree 3. Site Sketch (no construction involved) or Site Plan (new/expanding development involved) 4. Bird Nesting Survey if done during bird breeding and nesting season (Jan 1 to Sep 15) 5. Arborist Verification Forms (including Tree Protection Measures Form M5) 6. Application fee (check the fee schedule for latest fees)
<input type="checkbox"/> To alter or remove a <i>non-native</i> or <i>non-native invasive tree</i> .	➔ 1. Above general requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/> To alter or remove protected tree below or adjacent to public overhead lines located in the State Responsibility Areas.	➔ 1. Above general requirements.

**Zoning Clearance with Inspection (CZO Sec. 8178-7.5.2.1) (CZO Sec. 8178-7.7.3)**

**General requirements** for zoning clearance permits with inspection

1. All items required for the Zoning Clearance.
2. Inspection by the Planning Director's designee following approval of Zoning Clearance.

Development that encroaches less than 10 percent into a protected tree's TPZ\*.



1. Above requirements.  
From a certified arborist or qualified tree consultant:
2. Purpose of encroachment, degree of encroachment, recommendations to avoid and minimize potential impacts.
3. Project Construction Standards.
4. Statement that proposed encroachment is not expected to result in permanent damage to tree.
5. Tree Protection, Planting, and Monitoring Plan, if applicable.

To prune living limbs (<4 inches in diameter) less than 20% of tree's overall canopy.



1. Above general requirements.
2. Justification from qualified tree consultant if removing branches larger than 4 inches in diameter.
3. Tree Protection, Planting, and Monitoring Plan, if applicable.

**Planned Development Permit (CZO Sec. 8178-7.5.1) (CZO Sec. 8178-7.7.4)**

The following activities require a planned development permit (discretionary permit) under the CZO Tree Protection Ordinance.

**General requirements** for all Planned Development Permits:

1. All items required for the Zoning Clearance permit application plus the following:
  - a. Tree Transplantation Specifications for protected trees proposed to be transplanted, if applicable.
  - b. Tree Survey, if applicable.
  - c. Tree Protection, Planting and Monitoring Plan if replacement trees are needed or if a protected tree is relocated.
  - d. Agricultural Commissioner Verification, if applicable.
  - e. Farm Plan, if applicable.
  - f. Structure or Sewer Line Verification, if applicable.

Protected tree was removed, altered or transplanted without the required permit.



1. Above general requirements.

To alter a protected tree in a way that may compromise the health of the tree and lead to qualified tree consultant's recommendation for tree removal.



1. Above general requirements.

To encroach into the tree protected zone.



1. Above general requirements.

To prune more than 20% of the tree canopy.



1. Above general requirements.

Following the issuance of an Emergency Permit.



1. Above general requirements.

\*Tree Protection Zone (see Figure 2).

**Mitigation Requirements**

The following mitigation measures to reduce damage to protected trees shall be undertaken in the following order:

- **Avoidance:** Avoid direct and indirect impacts to *protected trees* through project siting and design.

- **Onsite Mitigation:** Transplant or plant replacement trees on the same property where the *protected trees* were impacted.
- **Off-Site Mitigation:** Transplant or plant replacement trees in an off-site location within the Ventura County coastal zone and, when feasible, within the same watershed.
- **In-lieu Fees:** In-lieu fee into the Planning Division's Tree Mitigation Fund when onsite or off-site mitigation is infeasible.

See Sec. 8178-7.6.1 for more information on tree replacement for altered or removed protected trees.

## Explanation of Submittal Requirements

Provided below are detailed explanations of the requested forms, and the content requirements of the major informational items identified in Table 2. Alternate documentation may be accepted to address some circumstances if deemed adequate by the Planning Director.

- **Arborists Verifications and Reports**

An Arborist Verification or Report is required for most Tree Permits. Guidelines for the preparation of these documents are available online at [www.vcrma.org/tree-permits-and-the-tree-protection-ordinance](http://www.vcrma.org/tree-permits-and-the-tree-protection-ordinance). All required verifications and reports must be prepared by an arborist certified by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) or a related professional, such as a landscape architect, with qualifying tree-related education, knowledge and experience, as determined by the Planning Director.

Arborist Verifications. An Arborist Verification is required for tree altering activity subject to a ministerial tree permit or an authorization letter. Verifications provide simple confirmation from a tree professional, on a form provided by the Planning Division, of basic tree information or site conditions. There are five categories of Arborist Verification, which include:

1. Dead tree (Tree Form M1). Required to remove a dead tree.
2. Tree status (Tree Form M4). Required for most ministerial permits.
3. Tree protection measures (Tree Form M5). Written or photo verification that tree protection measures were in place throughout the time of construction may be requested by the Planning Division.

Arborist Reports (Tree Doc D-AR). An Arborist Report is required for tree altering activity subject to a discretionary tree permit. Arborist Reports provide greater detail on the proposed tree alterations and any necessary tree protection measures for remaining protected trees.

- **Bird Nesting Survey**

A Bird Nesting Survey Report is required if tree alteration, transplantation, or removal occurs during the bird nesting season (Jan 1 through Sep 15). The Report shall be prepared by a qualified biologist or ornithologist and include the results of the initial nesting bird survey and plan for continued surveys and protocols and methods that will be implemented to avoid and minimize impacts to nesting birds. See Sec. 8178-7.7.4.1.1 for detailed requirements.

- **Structure or Sewer Line Verifications**

Structure. If a protected tree is proposed to be altered or removed because the tree interferes with an existing structure, then the applicant must submit written verification from a licensed structural engineer or licensed building contractor that the alteration to the tree is necessary to avoid structural damage. Verification must be submitted, and must include the engineer or contractor's license number and contact information, the parcel address, and a brief description of the tree, its location, the nature of the interference or obstruction, and alternatives available to avoid tree removal or alteration.

Private Sewer Line. If a protected tree is proposed to be altered or removed because a tree interferes with an existing sewer line, the necessity of the proposed action, and alternatives available to avoid tree removal or alteration must be verified by a qualified plumbing contractor, sewer service provider, or other qualified professional approved by the Planning Director.

- **Color Photos**

Two to four color photos per affected tree or stand are required. Photos should be taken from different vantage points, clearly illustrate the reason for the request, and should identify the tree's location relative to nearby vegetation or landmarks. Minimum print size is 4" x 6." Digital files are requested.

- **Proof of Emergency**

In an emergency situation, permit applications shall be made and processed in accordance with Sec. 8181-3.7 (Emergency Coastal Development Permits).

Emergency. An emergency is a sudden unexpected occurrence where a *protected tree*, because of its lack of structural integrity, demands immediate action to prevent or mitigate loss or damage to life, a significant loss of property, and where there is no feasible alternative to ensure public health and safety.

- **Tree Protection, Planting, and Monitoring Plan**

A Tree Protection, Planting, and Monitoring Plan (TPPMP) shall be prepared in the event that a protected tree is proposed for removal, alteration, or encroachment and replacement trees will be required or relocation of a protected tree. The TPPMP shall be submitted prior to approval of the Planned Development Permit and shall include but are not limited to:

Recommendations for onsite or off-site mitigation measures.

Bird Nesting Survey. Required no more than three days prior to earth disturbing or construction activities during the bird nesting season (Jan 1 to Sep 15).

Work Area Limits. Flagging and stakes or construction fencing will be installed that define the boundary that contains all tree alteration or removal activities.

Replacement Trees. The species and number of replacement trees to be planted as mitigation for the removal or protected trees. Include location of replacement trees.

Transplanted Trees. Identify protected trees to be transplanted and the receiving site. Include planting specifications.

Tree Care. Recommendations for existing trees during construction including but not limited to pruning, irrigation, aeration, and mulching.

- **Tree Survey**

A Tree Survey shall be submitted for: (1) if a protected tree is proposed to be removed or transplanted, (2) if construction or grading activities occur within a TPZ, and (3) if new development requires alteration or removal of a protected tree. The Tree Survey may be provided separately or added to the Site Sketch or Plan submitted for the permit application and shall include:

Contact information. Names, phone numbers and addresses of the property owner, applicant, and project consultants.

Background and project information. Description of the physical characteristics of the project site.

Site observations. Summary of proposed survey method.

Inventory and assessment of health of all protected trees on site.

Site sketch or plan.

- **Agricultural Commissioner Verification**

If removal of protected tree in a tree row presently serving commercial crop production is proposed, the Agricultural Commissioner shall verify in writing that the proposed action will not increase the potential for loss of agricultural soils due to increased wind erosion. If the Agricultural Commissioner determines the tree removal will result in the loss of agricultural soils, a Planned Development Permit shall be required.

- **Farm Plan**

If a protected tree is removed for the purpose of expanding existing or the establishment of new crop production, a farm plan shall be prepared. It should include information on irrigated crop types, crop locations, and phased implementation.

## Site Sketch or Plan

The Site Sketch or Plan shall include existing development, access, location of protected trees in relation to site improvements, identification of trees to be altered or removed, the TPZs for all protected trees, and any proposed encroachments. The information on the site sketch or plan shall be reflected in the final approved construction plans including the required buffer area and the appropriate protection measures to be in place throughout the time of construction. The construction plans should also include the location of the equipment wash-off area (outside the TPZ of any protected trees).

Site Sketch: For tree alteration or removal associated with existing development, and part of a ministerial tree permit request, a simple, legible site sketch is adequate. The site sketch must be drawn roughly to scale on 8.5 x 11" paper. The map should be at a scale of 1" = 30' or larger. (See Figure 3).

Resources: Google Maps aeriols can be used for rough locations of buildings, trees, etc. "What's My Zoning" at [www.vcrma.org/what-s-my-zoning](http://www.vcrma.org/what-s-my-zoning) can be used to get a map of your parcel showing parcel lines.

Site Plan: For tree alteration or removal associated with new construction or a discretionary permit request, include a scaled project site plan. (See Figure 4)

Indicate the location and dimension of all the following existing and proposed features:

- Parcel lines. If the parcel is considerably large, provide a (separate or inset) context map showing parcel lines and roads, so that the main site sketch is at a scale that adequately shows the trees and related structures/features.
- Address and assessor parcel number (APN) of the property. (For APNs go to <http://prop-tax.countyofventura.org>)
- Streets, highways, access and public or private easements (include street names).
- Buildings and structures.
- Driveways and other paved areas within 15' of protected tree trunks. Indicate if paving is pervious or impervious.
- For projects that involve the installation of underground utilities illustrate the extent of trenching to the point of connection and for projects that involve above ground utilities show the location of new wires and poles to the point of connection.
- The location of the equipment wash-off area, if applicable. The wash-off area, including the low surface flow area of any chemicals, should not be within the TPZ.
- Any change in grade within the TPZ of each plotted tree must be indicated.
- Any other relevant features (such as fences) related to the permit request.

**For trees that are part of the request:**

- Type and girth of tree.
- Trunk location and approximate outline of tree's dripline.
- Mark trees proposed for removal with an "X".
- Number the trees if more than one.

**Other protected trees:**

- Trunk location and outline of the TPZ of all protected trees, *including trees growing on adjacent parcels*, that have TPZs within 20' of: 1) the limits of the construction area of the proposed project or 2) other trees proposed for removal. The TPZ extends out from the trunk to 5' beyond the dripline, or a minimum of 15' from the trunk – whichever is greater.
- Location of any proposed replacement trees.

**Figure 2: The Tree Protection Zone**

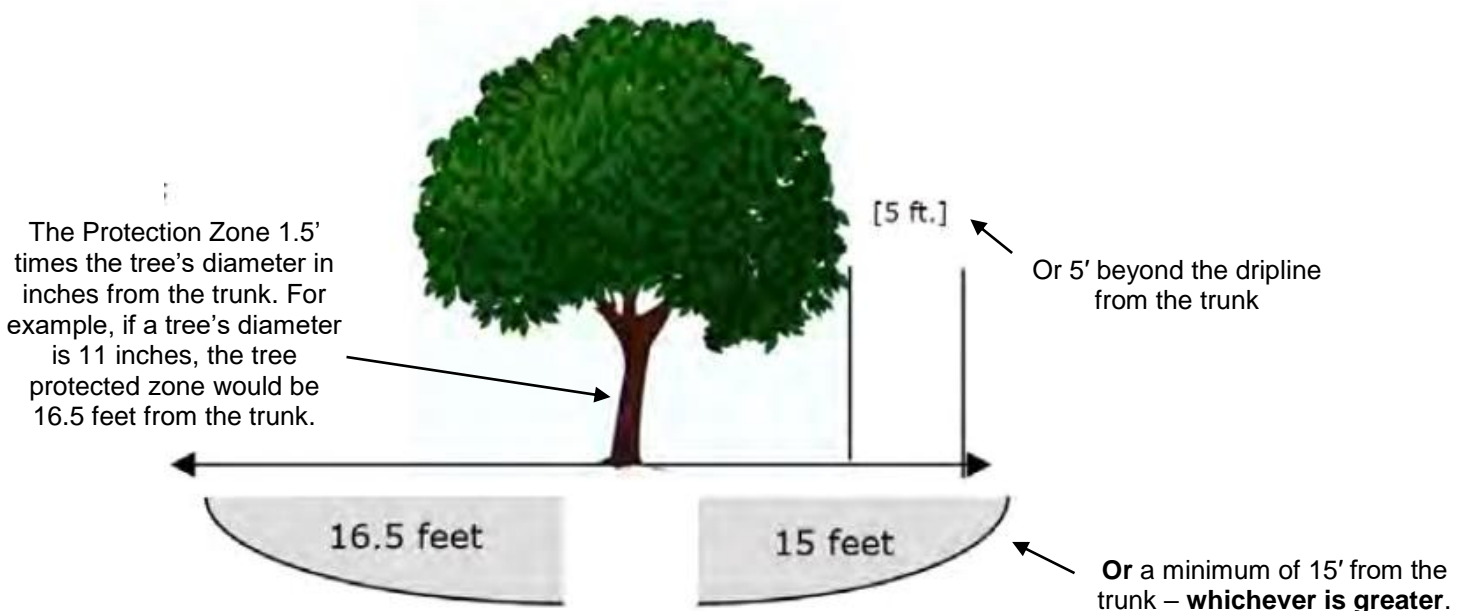
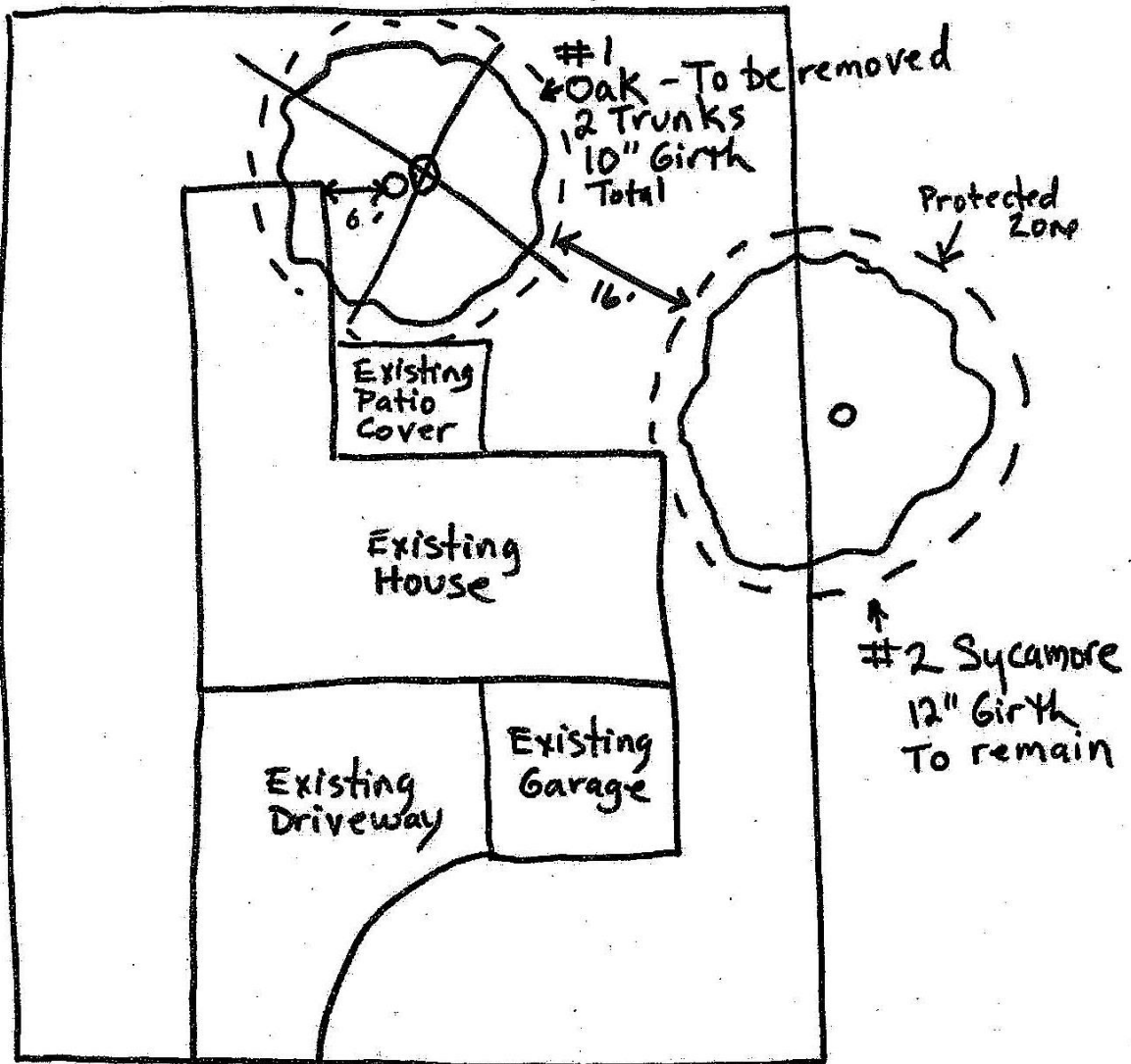


Figure 3: Sample Site Sketch  
(no new construction)



Sycamore Drive

APN: 149-0-031-520  
Address: 4971 Sycamore Drive



**Figure 4: Sample Site Plan**  
(new construction)

