



qathet

REGIONAL DISTRICT

SECTION 1	CORPORATE POLICIES
POLICY	1.14
SUBJECT	TREE HAZARD MANAGEMENT POLICY
ADOPTED	AUGUST 23, 2018

POLICY STATEMENT:

The qathet Regional District (qRD) believes in a culture that protects the health and safety of the public, leadership and staff. Tree removal is an acceptable management option when required for human health and safety, to facilitate approved development, to protect infrastructure, or for forest health management. Regional District parks are host to many recreational pursuits; it is the responsibility of the qRD to protect people and property from the risk associated with hazard trees.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this management policy is to provide direction to staff for the maintenance of trees on regional district owned and managed properties including: parks, right of ways, and other civic lands.

SCOPE:

All properties owned, leased or managed by the qathet Regional District are encompassed under this policy.

POLICY/GUIDELINES:

An important aspect of a regional district's overall risk management program is the management of tree hazards. The tree hazard management policy reduces a significant liability exposure for Regional District operations.

LAND TENURE:

The qathet Regional District operates on several different land ownership arrangements and its properties neighbour both Crown and private lands. Different rules apply to each tenure type, and the qRD must assess to the rules for each tenure type.

It is the responsibility of the Manager of Operational Services to:

- a) Determine land tenure
- b) Determine if the tree(s) is on lands controlled by the qRD

- c) Determine appropriate Ministry or Ministries to contact for Crown land operations
- d) Obtain all necessary permits and approvals prior to any cutting and or removal from site

No tree may be assessed, pruned, or felled without prior approval of the Manager of Operational Services.

TREE ASSESSMENT:

An annual assessment will be done on trees in high value target areas within qRD owned, leased, or managed properties, additional assessments may be generated by reports of potentially hazardous trees by staff or the general public.

TREE REMOVAL CRITERIA:

Trees will be considered for removal only when one or more of the following criteria have been met:

1. The tree has been considered a “hazard tree” and the risk of failure cannot be mitigated by pruning or other practical means and meets the recommendation from a qualified professional, meaning Certified Tree Risk Assessor.
2. The tree is endangering the health or stability of other trees.
3. The tree is interfering with or inhibiting the normal development of a more desirable tree.
4. The tree poses an extreme public nuisance due to its species, size, location, or condition.
5. The tree is encroaching into a street or walkway in such a way that visibility and pedestrian or vehicular clearance is reduced thereby causing a traffic safety problem.
6. The tree’s removal has been approved as part of a park plan.
7. The tree is impeding the development of streets, utilities, public works, or facilities.
8. Felled trees are to remain in place unless they create a hazard, interfere with development, or present an obstacle to travel. Felled trees remaining in place must be limbed and bucked so that the tree is resting on the ground.

DEFINITIONS:

Qualified Professional

A Forest Professional in good standing with the Association of BC Forest Professionals, or a Certified Arborist holding certification in Tree Risk Assessment by the ISA or ITA.

Green Space

Any forested space which does not include targets as defined below. Trees in green spaces will not be included in the annual tree assessment process unless a specific tree(s) are identified and of concern.

Wildlife Tree(s)

A standing tree or group of trees with special characteristics that provide habitat for the conservation or enhancement of wildlife.

Exposure

The amount of time a target may be exposed to a potential risk.

Target

The most important target is a person. Other examples are structures (inhabited or uninhabited), vehicles (parked or moving), utility services.

Target Zone

The area a tree or tree parts are likely to influence if it fails. In general terms this is considered to be the area 1.5 times the tree height.

Tree Planting

Whenever possible, a tree will be planted to replace a tree that has been removed under this Policy. Replacement trees will be chosen from a list of species native to the area, and where applicable, resistant to any disease that may be present.

Value

All values of trees are to be included in assessments, including but not limited to: wildlife value, shade, wind buffer, sound barrier, timber value, and aesthetics.

Fuel Mitigation

In keeping with Best Management Practices- woody debris from hazard tree removal, topping, or pruning will be chipped, burned (where permitted and safe to do so), left to decompose or removed. Necessary permits must be in place prior to mitigation.

RESPONSIBILITY/AUTHORITY TO ACT:

The Manager of Operational Services is responsible for ensuring that Operational Services Department staff and contractors are aware of this policy and meet current standards identified.