

A Guide for Businesses and Landscapers for Tree and Shrub Pruning in the Town of Cary

INTENT

The Town of Cary is devoted to protecting and beautifying the very landscape that provides Cary's charm. For over 30 years, Cary has adopted, amended and implemented landscape standards which help define the character and aesthetics of the Town.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this fact sheet is to educate businesses and landscape contractors on the proper way to maintain landscaping in accordance with the Town's Land Development Ordinance.

LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY

Per Cary's Land Development Ordinance (LDO), the owners of the property and their agents, heirs, or assigns are responsible for the installation, preservation and maintenance of all planting and physical features (installed or vegetated natural areas).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

What is excessive pruning?

Excessive pruning is defined in the Land Development Ordinance as the removal of more than one-third (1/3) of the tree canopy or cutting back the limbs to a point which prevents the natural growth of the tree. This 1/3 area allowance is to allow pruning dead limbs from lower branches. "Topping" trees is not permitted. Severe or excessive pruning of shrubs or trees is defined as the cutting back of branches to the point where the shrub does not meet the intent of the streetscape or buffer requirements. Shrubs intended to screen drives and parking lot areas are to be maintained as a continuous hedge with a minimum height of three feet.



Are there any exceptions for excessive pruning?

In the event that existing required vegetation located within any required buffers, streetscapes, vehicular use or other landscape areas poses an immediate or imminent threat to improved structures on private or public property, severe pruning and/or removal of the vegetation is allowable provided prior approval from the Planning Director is obtained, and the performance standard of the landscape area is maintained consistent with this Ordinance.

What about slight pruning?

Trees and shrubs may only be pruned to promote natural growth as intended to meet any streetscape and buffer requirements. In some cases pruning may take place to prevent damage to utilities, address sight distance requirements or to prevent damage to buildings. Upon approval by the Planning Department, some pruning on non-residential properties may be allowed to remove limbs and allow visibility.



What can happen if I accidentally prune too much?

Cary's goal is to educate businesses and landscape contractors on the Ordinance and the importance placed by Cary on protecting and promoting healthy and aesthetic vegetation. It is not the intent of the Town to issue civil citations, however if excessive pruning does occur, Town action may include replanting requirements and, as a last resort, civil citation.

Who do I call if I have questions about diseased, dead or danger trees?

Call the Planning Department at 469-4082.

How do I get a copy of the Town of Cary Land Development Ordinance?

You may access the Land Development Ordinance at www.townofcary.org

Click on site index

Click on Land Development Ordinance

How do I report pruning that I believe is in violation?

Call the Zoning Compliance team at 469-4082

Where can I find information on proper pruning methods?

You may visit the Planning Department on the Town's website www.townofcary.org/depts/planning/planninghome.htm and download the "Landscape Maintenance Guide".

Landscaping Chapter,

Cary Land Development Ordinance:

http://www.amlegal.com/pdffiles/Cary_pdf/LDO_CH07.pdf

