



TOWN OF HINGHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Tree Removal and Replacement Policy

Purpose. Trees within Resource Areas are valued for their ability to reduce flood velocity, stabilize soil, improve water quality, provide habitat for wildlife, and produce shade that contributes to healthy vegetation, cooler air, and cooler water. Dead tree trunks (“snags”) and fallen trees provide habitat for cavity nesters and organic nutrients for soil. It is the intent of this policy to protect these characteristics and deter the removal of trees from Resource Areas.

Policy. The Commission will not allow the loss of trees six inches (6”) or greater in diameter at breast height (DBH) within their jurisdiction. At its discretion, the Commission may grant a waiver to this policy, however the following replacements shall be required.

Tree Removed	Replacement Required*
Within 100 foot buffer zone	One to one tree or one to multi-shrub replacement
Within 50 foot buffer zone	Two to one tree replacement
Within a Resource Area	Three to one tree replacement
*Replacement trees shall be: 1) the same species as what is removed, unless it is non-native to Massachusetts, 2) 1½-2 inches minimum caliper, and 3) suitable for the site.	

In order to obtain a waiver, the location and number of trees six inches (6”) or greater in DBH to be removed shall be clearly indicated on a site plan and submitted to the Commission for review. Both the location and number of trees shall be field-verified by the Commission and/or its agent.

Additionally, the replacement trees and/or shrubs shall survive at least two full growing seasons with a minimum of 75% survival rate. Documentation of the survival rate at the end of two growing seasons shall be submitted to the Commission. If a 75% survival rate is not achieved, replacement plantings of the same species shall be made by the applicant.

Exemptions. A dead or diseased tree that presents an immediate safety hazard by virtue of its condition and proximity to a house or garage, children's play area, driveway, or utility line, provided that a Massachusetts Certified Arborist examines the tree and certifies its immediate danger. A property owner then needs only to notify the Commission in writing of the intent to remove the tree and provide a photograph of the tree and a letter from the arborist testifying to the hazard. An arborist’s letter is not necessary in the case of a dead tree.

At the discretion of the Commission, owner-occupied, single-family homes may be fully or partially exempt from this policy based on lot constraints (e.g., insufficient area to replace all of the trees as required by this policy).