

Shoreland Protection

Individual Permit Application



Standalone Tree in Grass Lawn Guidance

Vegetation Protection Standards

The Vegetation Protection Standards ([10 V.S.A. § 1447](#)) identify the minimum requirements for maintaining a “well-distributed stand of trees” in areas of vegetative cover (e.g., forested areas). A “well-distributed stand of trees” is a 25-foot x 25-foot area (625 square feet) that consists of:

- A minimum of 12 “points” worth of trees (≥ 2 ” DBH*).
- At least 5 saplings (< 2 ” DBH).
- All vegetation under three feet in height, groundcover, and duff (e.g., the forest floor) is not cut, covered, or removed.

Circumference (inches)	DBH (inches)	Points
5" \leq 12"	2" \leq 4"	1
12" \leq 23"	4" \leq 8"	2
23" \leq 38"	8" \leq 12"	4
≥ 38 "	≥ 12 "	8

As identified by the adjacent table, the larger a tree is, the more points and associated functions the tree provides over a larger surface area (e.g., erosion control, bank stability, wildlife habitat).

*DBH = Diameter of tree in inches at 4.5 feet above ground level

Surface Area Measurement for a Standalone Tree in Grass Lawn

To determine the surface area of new cleared area or vegetative cover associated with a standalone tree in a grass lawn (i.e., any tree entirely surrounded by cleared area), measure the trunk of the tree at 4.5 feet off the ground. Using the circumference of the tree at that height, the adjacent table identifies the corresponding surface area (rounded to the nearest whole number).

These measurements should only be used for a standalone tree in grass lawn.

New Cleared Area/ Vegetative Cover (Square Feet)	Tree Circumference (Inches) at 4.5 Feet off the Ground
1	<52.2
2	52.2 to <67.3
3	67.3 to <79.8
4	79.8 to <90.5
5	90.5 to <99.9
6	99.9 to <108.7
7	108.7 to <116.2
8	116.2 to <123.8
9	123.8 to <131.3
10	131.3 to <137.6

New cleared area example: A landowner is applying to remove a standalone tree in grass lawn. That tree has a circumference of 75 inches. The removal of that tree would be 3 square feet of new cleared area.

Vegetative cover example: A landowner has a 25,000 square foot parcel that is entirely cleared area except for four trees with circumferences of 50", 55", 70", and 100". The standalone trees represent 12 square feet of vegetative cover, meaning that the parcel consists of 24,988 square feet of cleared area.

Removing a Standalone Tree in Grass Lawn – Revegetation Requirements

If proposing to remove a standalone tree in grass lawn requires a best management practice (i.e., revegetation), either replanting, establishing a no-mow zone, or a combination of the two can be chosen as an option to revegetate and fulfill permitting requirements.¹

Replanting

- For every square foot of new cleared area, a minimum of one square foot of revegetation is required.
 - For example, if removing one tree results in 2 square feet of cleared area, two saplings (each being 1 square foot of vegetative cover) would be required to be planted.
- Native tree species must be used for replanting.²
- Replanting a shrub species (e.g., blueberry) to replace the removal of a tree species is not acceptable as the replanted vegetation would not provide the same functions.



No-Mow Zone

- A no-mow zone is a cleared area (e.g., grass lawn) that is demarcated (e.g., with a line of stone, fencing, etc.) and is no longer mowed.
- The no-mow zone is to be left undisturbed to allow the area to reestablish to forested lands (i.e., vegetative cover – trees, shrubs, groundcover, and duff). All emerging vegetation must be left undisturbed until a “well-distributed stand of trees” exists.
- The size of the tree in grass lawn that is removed influences the size of the corresponding no-mow zone. For each tree to be removed, determine the DBH of the tree and use the following table to determine the size of the required no-mow zone:



Size of Tree to Be Removed	Corresponding Size of No-Mow Zone
2" to <4" DBH	52 square feet
4" to <8" DBH	104 square feet
8" to <12" DBH	208 square feet
≥12" DBH	416 square feet

¹ Note that no-mow zones will not necessarily be sufficient to remedy a shoreland clearing violation.

² [Restoring Natural Plant Communities](#)