

FORT HOOD TREE CARE ORDINANCE

PURPOSE: To establish a Tree Board, define the duties of the Board, and establish standards necessary to ensure that Fort Hood will continue to realize the benefits provided by its urban trees. Trees are important in our community because they enhance urban environments by providing shade, beauty, and wind protection. They also protect the soil, muffle noises, filter air, and provide screen between buildings. Large, healthy trees are attractive and desired in our community.

PRINCIPALS:

1. A Tree Board is hereby created and established for Fort Hood. The purpose of the Board is to provide the preservation, protection, replacement, proper planting, and proper maintenance of trees located within the cantonment areas of Fort Hood.

a. The Tree Board will be composed of representatives of organizations who are responsible for the care of trees on Fort Hood. The Tree Board includes DPW Environmental Division (Natural Resources Management Branch), DPW Maintenance Division (Roads and Grounds), DPW Engineering and Services Division, III Corps and Fort Hood Environmental Law Attorney, Fort Hood Family Housing, the Courses of Clear Creek, Belton Lake Outdoor Recreation Area, the Sportsmen's Center, Killeen ISD (campuses located on Fort Hood), and Central Texas College (campus located on Fort Hood).

b. The Installation Agronomist will serve as the Chairman of the Tree Board.

c. The responsibilities of the Chairman of the Tree Board are to conduct the meetings of the Tree Board, keep the Board members informed, and to request input from the Board members.

d. The responsibilities of the Board members are to attend the Board meetings, to represent the position of their organization to the Board, and to communicate the decisions of the Board back to their organization.

e. The Tree Board will meet as frequently as needed. Only the Chairman of the Tree Board may schedule meetings. Board members may submit a request to the chairman to call a meeting.

f. Decisions of the Tree Board will be made by a consensus vote.

g. Most business of the Tree Board should be conducted through email. This includes voting on business items.

2. This ordinance applies to all trees located within the cantonment areas of Fort Hood.

3. Definitions:

a. A tree is defined as a self-supporting woody perennial plant with a total vertical height of at least 6 feet with at least one trunk measuring at least 3 inches at diameter at breast height (DBH) (located 4.5 feet above existing grade) or having a trunk diameter of at least 2 inches if planted by or for Fort Hood. Trees which split into several trunks of sufficient diameter (each measuring 3 inches or greater) under DBH will be considered as separate trees, regardless of whether they arise from the same rootball.

b. Heritage Tree.

(1) Any tree having a trunk diameter of 15 inches or greater measured at DBH.

(2) Any hardwood tree native to Fort Hood having a trunk diameter of 12 inches or greater measured at DBH. Inquiries into Fort Hood native tree species can be made at Fort Hood DPW Natural Resources Management Branch office.

(3) Any tree or group of trees specifically designated by the Tree Board for protection because of historical significance, special character, ecological value, or community benefit

4. Tree preservation, protection, and replacement

a. No person shall intentionally damage, cut, carve, paint, abuse, or harm any tree or injure the bark of any tree located within the cantonment areas of Fort Hood. Any non-approved removal shall be replaced as stated in the next paragraph at no cost to the government.

b. Tree removal and replacement policy: All native hardwood trees should be preserved and protected. Preservation of trees is preferred over replacement. If removal of a tree becomes necessary, each tree that is removed must be replaced at required ratios. Replacement trees must also be maintained (including watering) for 1 year after planting. Any replacement tree that dies within one year of the planting date must be replaced and maintained for another year. Replacement policies as follows:

(1) If a heritage tree is removed, it will be replaced at a 10:1 ratio (10 trees planted for every 1 removed). Replacement trees must have a minimum DBH of 4 inches or greater.

(2) Any native hardwood tree (with DBH greater than 3 inches; not classified as a heritage tree) removed will be replaced at a 10:1 ratio. Replacement trees must have a minimum DBH of 2 inches.

(3) Any tree removed with a DBH of 3 inches or less does not need to be replaced, unless it is a landscaping tree planted by or for Fort Hood. These trees must be replaced at a ratio of 1:1, and replacement trees must have a minimum DBH of 2 inches.

c. Any request for waiver of the replacement policy must be presented in writing to the Chairman of the Tree Board. This written request must include the reason for

requesting the waiver. It will then be submitted to the Tree Board for vote, and will only be approved if a majority affirmative vote is received.

d. Dead or diseased trees not under contract that are a hazard to life or property should be removed and replaced at a ratio of one new tree for each tree removed. All tree classifications of 'dead or diseased' must be approved by the Fort Hood Agronomist before tree removal occurs.

e. New plantings (including replacements): Species of trees must be selected from the species listed in Appendix N of the Installation Design Guide (Plant Palette) or in the Memorandum of Instruction (MOI)–Landscaping Unit Areas. Any species not found in the approved plant list cannot be planted on Fort Hood without the expressed permission of the Fort Hood Tree Board.

f. Exemptions to the replacement policy.

(1) Trees can be removed within 10 feet of existing Fort Hood utility easements/corridors and replaced at a 1:1 ratio with small landscaping trees/shrubs where applicable as determined by DPW. Inquiries into proper landscaping trees/shrubs for utility corridors/easements can be made at Fort Hood DPW Natural Resources Management Branch office. Any new utility easements/corridors must follow the applicable tree replacement policies in section 4.

(2) In accordance with Army Regulation 190-11 RAR, trees may be removed within the 30 foot clear zone of cantonment outer perimeter fence as a force protection measure, except for trees which must be retained "for erosion control, passive defense, or for legal reasons". Trees removed in this clear zone will not be subject to the tree replacement policy, unless they are trees determined to be an exception to this regulation. All tree removal (including removal under AR 190-11 RAR) must be coordinated through the Fort Hood Agronomist.

(c) Tree removal as required by Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations is exempt from the tree replacement policy. All tree removal (including removal under FAA regulations) must be coordinated through the Fort Hood Agronomist.

g. For tree protection measures reference MOI–Landscaping Unit Areas.

5. Tree planting guidelines.

a. Locate and mark proposed planting sites and apply for an approved excavation permit (FH200-X10). A permit is required prior to any digging on Fort Hood and necessary to prevent damage to the underground utility systems.

b. Select the right trees for the right locations. Consider the size that the tree may reach at maturity, and any overlap of sidewalks, drives, buildings, streets, and overhead utility lines. Trees should not be planted within 10 feet of any buildings or structures, within 10 feet of any overhead utility line, or within 5 feet of any underground water or sewer line.

c. Dig holes so that the hole is two to three times the diameter of the container and no deeper than the container. Keep all original topsoil for backfilling. Plant only as deep as the level of the dirt in the original pot; planting too deeply may kill the tree.

d. Always handle trees by the container or the rootball, never by the stems, as this may damage the tree. If the tree is root-bound, make two cuts across the bottom layer of roots and several cuts along the sides to stimulate new root growth.

e. Set the tree in the hole and remove the container or the burlap and wire. Backfill only with the original soil. Do not backfill with compost, peat moss, or other materials. Add one-third of the backfill soil at a time, tamp lightly and use slow-running water to settle the soil and help secure the tree. Repeat this process until the hole is full and thoroughly watered.

f. Place a 3- to 4- inch-thick layer of mulch around all trees to keep them free of weeds and grass. Pull mulch back one and one-half inches from the stem to prevent fungal problems. Use only shredded hardwood mulch, hardwood chips, or cedar mulch. Pine bark mulch is not recommended because it is easily washed or blown away. Do not use any type of rock or plastics instead of mulch because these will not provide organic nutrients to the soil.

g. Do not use tree stakes or guy wires unless absolutely necessary for support. These actually weaken trees and are detrimental to proper trunk development. Only very large (greater than 4-inch trunk at DBH) balled and burlapped trees may be staked for a period not to exceed 2 years; after this time, all stakes and guy wires must be removed.

h. Do not wrap any material around the base of the trunk. Do not paint trees. This encourages problems with insects and disease and causes the bark to become weak.

i. Do not prune trees at time of planting. It is not necessary because the newly planted trees need lots of foliage to build their root system. Damaged or diseased limbs may be pruned at planting time.

j. Trees will need to be watered until they are established (1 year). Water trees once per week during the summer months and every other week during the fall, winter, and spring months. Watering is not needed during times of sufficient rainfall (1 inch or more of rainfall during the previous week is sufficient to not need watering).

6. Tree maintenance and care provisions:

a. All tree care that occurs will follow the American National Standard for Tree Care Operations – Standard Practices for Pruning, available from American National Standards Institute (www.ansi.org).

b. For pruning and trimming of trees, do not make flush cuts; only collar cuts are allowed. Flush cuts are cuts that are made flush against the tree trunk or limbs; these cuts severely damage trees by removing the branch collar. A collar cut is defined as a

cut that leaves the branch collar intact. If the collar is left in place, the tree can heal properly, preventing rot and insect attack.

c. Special provision for oak trees: It is required that all pruning and trimming cuts on all species of oak trees be sprayed with wound paint immediately after each cut is made (spray within 10 seconds after cut is made) in order to help prevent the spread of oak wilt disease.

d. Trees should not be topped. Topping is defined as the severe removal or cutting back of large limbs within the tree canopy to stubs, so that the normal canopy is removed and the tree is disfigured. Topping results in the rotting of branches, insect infestations, rapid growth of weak branches, and often, death of the tree. Trees that are exempt from this provision include trees severely damaged by storms or trees under obstructions where normal pruning is impractical.


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