



ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER #000107 051209

CODE INTERPRETATION

CODE SECTION: 20.50.310

I. ISSUE: Process for evaluating hazardous tree permit exemption requests.

II. FINDINGS:

Shoreline Municipal Code (SMC) 20.50.310(A)(1) states that emergency situations on private property involving danger to life or property may be exempt from tree removal permit.

SMC 20.50.310(A)(1)(f) requires that a certified arborist or professional forester fill out a risk assessment form for a hazard tree permit exemption request. The International Society of Arborists (ISA) is the certifying agency for arborists.

SMC 20.20.042 defines “Qualified Professional” as *A person with experience, training and competence in the pertinent discipline. A qualified professional must be licensed to practice in the State of Washington in the related professional field, if such field is licensed. If not licensed, a qualified professional must have a national certification in the pertinent field. If national certification in the field does not exist, the minimum qualification should be a bachelor’s degree with 10 years of related professional work, or master’s degree in the field and three years of related professional work.*

SMC 20.50.310(A)(1)(g) allows the Director (or designee) to require a peer review of a permit exemption request.

SMC 20.50.310(A)(1)(h) states that *“Approval to cut or clear trees may only be given upon recommendation of the City - approved arborist that the condition constitutes an actual threat to life or property...”*

The International Society of Arborists has a certification program for Tree Risk Assessor, a program that was not in effect at the time the above sections of the Code were written.

III. CONCLUSIONS:

A certified Tree Risk Assessor would be the highest professional qualification to assess hazard trees. The current and previous City – approved arborists have this qualification. An evaluation form filled out by a certified Tree Risk Assessor would not likely require peer review, although the Code allows for additional peer review at the discretion of the Director.

IV. DECISION:

In order to expedite approval of a permit exemption, applicants requesting permit exemption for hazardous trees should have the hazard tree evaluation form filled out by a Tree Risk Assessor certified by the ISA. Arborists on the list of certified Tree Risk Assessors may be assumed to be City-approved arborists for purposes of administering SMC 20.50.310. In the event that there is any question regarding the extend of hazard, the option of peer review is still available.

original signed by Joe Tovar 5/14/09

Director's Signature

Date