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Sample Workbook For Measurement And Calculations Required By Proposed Section 1519.1

To comply with the provisions of section 1519, you will need the following materials:

1. Copy of your plat map from the DC Surveyor's Office. Section 1519 (D) requires that you protect all trees of circumference greater than 38 inches that are located within 25 feet of your building restriction line or your lot line abutting a public street. Building restriction lines are not uniform across Forest Hills. Your plat map will clearly indicate where the line is for your lot.
2. Flexible tape measure with at least one-inch gradations and at least 25 feet long. The measure should be made of a non-stretchable material. You will need to measure back 25 feet from your building restriction line. You will also need to measure the circumference of each tree at a height 4.5 feet above the ground.
3. The attached workbook will walk you through the measurements and calculations you will need to establish your right to remove a healthy tree. Note that there are no restrictions on removing dead or unhealthy trees, or trees that create an unsafe condition. However, you will need certification from a certified arborist that your tree(s) meet the dead/unhealthy/unsafe condition.
4. Failure to comply with the provisions of the Tree and Slope Overlay will mean that for the next seven (7) years you will need a special exception from the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) before obtaining any building permit. Should you sell your lot before seven years transpire, the buyer also will be required to seek special exceptions from the BZA until the seven-year period expires.

Line	Instructions	Result of measurement	Observations
1	Locate the Building Restriction Line (BRL) on your property. Stake a line 25 feet behind the BRL. If your plat map does not show a BRL, stake a line 25 feet away from all public roads abutting your property		
2	Count and measure all of the trees on your property. Measure the circumference of each tree by marking a spot on the trunk 4.5 feet (54 inches) above the ground and passing a flexible tape measure completely around the trunk at that point. Record your measurements below		
2a	Number of trees less than 12 inches in circumference	_____ trees	Any number of these trees can be removed without restriction

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2b	Trees with circumference 75 inches or more #1: _____ circumference #2: _____ circumference #3: _____ circumference #4: _____ circumference #5: _____ circumference Use a continuation page if more than 5 trees	_____ Total combined circumference of all trees with circumference of 75 inches or more	WARNING: Removing any of these trees will require that you receive a BZA special exception for any building permit for seven years from the date of removal
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2c	Trees with circumference 12-38 inches #1: _____ circumference #2: _____ circumference #3: _____ circumference #4: _____ circumference #5: _____ circumference Use a continuation page if more than 5 trees	_____ Total combined circumference of all trees with circumference of 12-38 inches	Removing any of these trees is subject to total circumference of protected trees on your lot (line 3)
2d	Trees with circumference 38-75 inches located within 25 feet of Building Restriction Line #1: _____ circumference #2: _____ circumference #3: _____ circumference #4: _____ circumference #5: _____ circumference Use a continuation page if more than 5 trees	_____ Total combined circumference of all trees with circumference of 38-75 inches located within 25 feet of BRL	WARNING: Removing any of these trees will require that you receive a BZA special exception for any building permit for seven years from the date of removal
2e	Trees with circumference 38-75 inches located more than 25 feet from Building Restriction Line #1: _____ circumference #2: _____ circumference #3: _____ circumference #4: _____ circumference #5: _____ circumference Use a continuation page if more than 5 trees	_____ Total combined circumference of all trees with circumference of 38-75 inches located more than 25 feet from BRL	You are permitted to remove up to 3 of these trees without BZA special exception
3	Total circumference inches. Add up the total combined circumferences in lines 2b, 2c, 2d, and 2e		
4	Multiply line 3 by .25		This is the total circumference inches that can be removed without BZA exception

5	Indicate the tree(s) you wish to remove		
5a	Number of trees less than 12 inches in circumference	_____ trees	Any number of these trees can be removed without restriction
5b	Trees with circumference 38-75 inches located more than 25 feet from Building Restriction Line	_____ trees	Only 3 of these trees can be removed without BZA exception
5c		_____	
		Total combined circumference	
5d	Trees with circumference 12-38 inches _____ trees	_____	
		Total combined circumference	
6	Total circumference inches to be removed. Add up the total combined circumferences in lines 5c and 5d		
7	If number of trees in line 5b is three (3) or fewer, all of the trees in line 5b can be removed without BZA exception		
8	If total circumference inches to be removed in line 6 exceeds 25% of total circumference inches in line 4 and number of trees in line 5d is one (1) or more: <i>STOP</i> . Go back and adjust the trees to be removed <i>so that total circumference inches in line 6 is less than or equal to line 4 or number of trees in line 5d is zero</i>		

WARNING: Lack of a defined baseline (denominator for total circumference inches)

Correctly measuring and calculating as in the above workbook does not mean that the homeowner has an unambiguous answer to the question “can I cut down that tree.” This is because 1519.1 fails to specify a denominator for total circumference inches.

Assuming that the form is filled out the first time a tree is removed, for how long should this baseline remain in effect? How often can I remove 25% of my total circumference inches? Once in the lifetime of the house? Once in my ownership of the house? What happens when I sell? Is the new owner limited because I legitimately cut down a few trees? Trees grow; trees die. Lots change hands. The baseline of total circumference inches is dynamic and must be clearly defined.