



Resource Protection Area (RPA) Guidance for Dead, Diseased, or Dying Vegetation

Resource Protection Areas (RPAs) are the 100ft corridors of environmentally sensitive land that lie alongside or near the shorelines of streams, rivers, and other waterways which drain mainly in James River and eventually into the Chesapeake Bay. In their natural condition, RPAs protect water quality, filter pollutants out of stormwater runoff, reduce the volume of stormwater runoff, prevent erosion, and perform other important biological and ecological functions. RPAs help to safeguard the quality of our rivers and streams and contribute to the health of the Chesapeake Bay. Dead, diseased, or dying trees may be removed in the RPA with County permission. Planning staff work with property owners to develop plans that manage the RPA buffer area in accordance with the Riparian Buffers Modification & Mitigation Guidance Manual. RPAs were established under the county's [Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance](#) which was adopted in response to state regulations. For additional information please visit the County's [CBPA website](#).

In addition to the requirements within the Ordinance, the following guidelines for administratively granting the removal of dead, diseased, or dying trees or shrubs within RPAs shall be applied to all requests.

1. The applicant must be the actual owner of the property.
2. Trees/shrubs should not be approved for removal based solely on aesthetic reasons.
3. A Resource Protection Area (RPA) Modification Request Application should be completed
4. A site plan depicting the following is needed (can use aerial or plat if available):
 - a. Approximate structures and water's edge on property.
 - b. Estimated 50 ft and 100 ft RPA buffers label on plan.
 - c. Location(s) of the vegetation to be removed within the RPA buffer.
5. If the vegetation is clearly dead, diseased or dying you may contact the County for a site visit for conformation. If the tree is not clearly dead, diseased, or dying a certified arborist report is needed indicating the species of the proposed tree(s)/shrub(s) to be removed, diameter at breast height (DBH), along with a narrative describing the reason(s) for the request and the method of tree/shrub removal.
6. Multiple requests for buffer modifications on the same parcel of land shall not be permitted unless it results from, an act of god, natural disaster, or other emergency conditions, declared by appropriate agencies within the Commonwealth.

For more information, please contact the Department of Community Development Planning and Zoning at 757-357-9114.