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Curious About Florida's New Tree Removal Law?

Four Things Hillsborough County Residents Need to Know About CS/HB 1159

House Bill 1159 bans the regulation of dangerous trees on residential property by local government, but that doesn't give property owners free range to trim, prune, or remove trees as they please.

Here are the facts about the Private Property Rights Protection Act, which went into effect July 1, 2019, and what they mean for property owners in unincorporated Hillsborough County:

1. Under the new legislation, property owners are required to obtain proper documentation from an arborist certified by the International Society of Arboriculture or a Florida licensed landscape architect that the tree presents a danger to the property
2. A tree devoid of green foliage is considered a dead tree and is most likely to pose a danger. Dead trees do not require a permit in unincorporated Hillsborough County but retaining a photo or two is encouraged.
3. Unless otherwise exempted by the Land Development Code, permits are required for the removal of healthy, non-dangerous trees on residential and non-residential properties for all tree species

4. Property owners are no longer required to replant a tree that was pruned, trimmed, or removed as a result of it posing a danger to the property
5. Mangrove tree protections remain unchanged by this new law

Not sure what's considered a dangerous tree? If a tree on your property has large, open cavities in the trunk or branch, dead or dying branches, or extensive decay and rot are present, you may want to contact a properly certified arborist or Florida licensed landscape architect to evaluate the tree. Other signs of a potentially dangerous tree include the development of a strong lean and cracks or splits in the trunk or where branches are attached.

Learn more about tree removal in unincorporated Hillsborough County.