

Before you clear: Denton land clearing planning checklist

Planning
checklist

For property owners in Denton and the west and north of Denton County. Work down the page before asking for quotes.

1. The property and who regulates it

- ☐ Confirm whether the land is inside city limits, in a city's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) or in unincorporated Denton County. The appraisal district record or the city's planning office can tell you.
- ☐ Mark the area to clear on an aerial photo or plat, and measure it in acres or square feet.
- ☐ Write down what the land is for: pasture, a house pad, a drive, trails, a yard or a fire break. The finish you need sets the method.
- ☐ Check for creeks, draws, ponds or mapped floodplain. Inside Denton, riparian buffers and other Environmentally Sensitive Areas limit clearing.
- ☐ Note any agricultural valuation. Changing the land's use can trigger a rollback tax; ask the Denton Central Appraisal District first.
- ☐ Check deed restrictions, HOA rules and any easements that cross the land.

2. Trees and features that stay

- ☐ Flag every tree you want to keep, with its trunk diameter measured at 4.5 feet above the ground.
- ☐ Inside Denton, a post oak 6 inches across or more is a heritage tree, and many other healthy trees from 6 inches are protected quality trees.
- ☐ Keep machines off the ground under the drip line of every keeper tree.
- ☐ Mark fences, wells, septic parts, sprinkler lines, survey pins and anything else that must survive the work.
- ☐ Note old wire, T-posts, dumped concrete or other debris hidden in the brush.

3. Permits and rules by jurisdiction

- ☐ City of Denton: clearing, grading or grubbing needs a permit unless the work disturbs no more than 2,000 square feet and 25 cubic yards and is outside floodplain and other sensitive areas. Any tree removal starts with a permit submittal through Building Safety on eTRAKiT; exemptions, such as an existing single-family lot or agricultural operations, are claimed on the same application. No open burning inside city limits.

- ☐ Denton ETJ: the city's subdivision and floodplain rules reach into the ETJ. Tree and clearing rules: confirmed per address.
- ☐ Justin: no dirt work, grading or earth disturbance without a city permit, applied for through the iWorQ portal; erosion control must be installed and kept up at all times. Burning weeds or grass off a lot needs a fire chief's permit for a vacant lot, with the fire department in attendance. Development Services: (940) 648-2541.
- ☐ Argyle: a tree removal permit is needed for protected species from 3 inches caliper, including in the town's ETJ, and a tree survey and protection plan must be approved before any site work or grading permit. Residential grading, drainage and erosion control work has its own town permit. No agricultural exemption is listed.
- ☐ Roanoke: the town's checklist states that no clear-cutting of land is allowed. A tree preservation plan is required before development on a site with protected trees, and removing a protected tree outside a lot's buildable area needs a tree removal permit. Open burning needs a town permit.
- ☐ Sanger: no construction permits until plans and the plat are approved; early grading is possible on written request with an engineer-sealed erosion control plan. Open burning needs a city permit, and burns are also reported to Denton County. Development Services: (940) 458-2059. Tree rules: confirmed per address.
- ☐ Krum: a land development permit is required for any land-disturbing activity, including grading, clearing and grubbing. Burning follows Denton County rules. Development Services: (940) 398-7302.
- ☐ Ponder: the town's published forms list no tree, grading or burn permit; requirements confirmed per address. Burning follows Denton County rules.
- ☐ Unincorporated Denton County: a county development permit is required for improvements and for any excavation in a flood zone. Development Services: (940) 349-2990.
- ☐ Everywhere: disturbing an acre or more of soil brings TCEQ construction stormwater requirements and a stormwater pollution prevention plan.

4. Utilities, 811 and overhead lines

- ☐ Request a Texas811 locate at least 48 hours ahead, not counting weekends and holidays, before any machine digs 16 inches or deeper: grubbing, root raking, deep stump grinding or grading.
- ☐ Mark overhead lines. No person, tool or machine may come within 6 feet of a high-voltage line without the line operator's arrangement made at least 48 hours in advance.
- ☐ Ask your electric provider about trees touching or leaning into lines. In Denton, call Denton Municipal Electric at (940) 349-7000 before any work near lines.
- ☐ Note pipelines, private water lines and septic fields that a locate ticket will not show.

5. Debris plan

- ☐ Decide what happens to every load: mulched in place, chipped, hauled away or, where allowed, burned.
- ☐ Inside Denton, open burning is not allowed. Curbside pickup takes up to 4 cubic yards of brush a week, cut to 4 to 8 foot lengths; the City of Denton Landfill takes larger loads.
- ☐ Outside city limits, a land-clearing burn is allowed only when no practical alternative exists and only on a Denton County burn day. Check the day's status at (940) 349-2840; burn sites must be at least 300 feet from residential and other occupied areas.
- ☐ Keep lumber, old fencing, tires, plastics and construction scrap out of any brush pile; they cannot be burned.
- ☐ Ash wood is regulated under the state emerald ash borer quarantine; do not move it out of the area as firewood.

6. Erosion and the finished ground

- ☐ Plan cover for every patch of bare soil before the next heavy rain: mulch, seed, erosion blankets or silt fence on the low edge.
- ☐ Expect delays after soaking rains on clay west and north of Denton; May and October are the wettest months.
- ☐ Agree on the finish: stumps at grade, stumps ground below grade, or stumps and roots removed.
- ☐ If you are building, remember that clearing is not grading; the pad still needs earthwork, compaction and drainage.
- ☐ Plan follow-up mowing or treatment for brush that resprouts, such as mesquite, honey locust and privet.

7. Comparing quotes

- ☐ The area to be cleared, measured the same way on each quote.
- ☐ The method named: forestry mulching, clearing and grubbing, selective clearing or brush hogging.
- ☐ The finish level, stated plainly: what happens to stumps and roots.
- ☐ Where the debris goes, and whether haul-off and disposal are included.
- ☐ Which trees stay, and how they are protected during the work.
- ☐ Who applies for permits and calls in the 811 locate.
- ☐ Erosion control after the work: what is included and what is extra.
- ☐ Anything excluded, such as grading, seeding, fence repair or utility work.
- ☐ How rain days, rescheduling and hidden debris are handled.
- ☐ Proof of insurance for whoever does the work.

Rules and requirements change. Confirm anything that matters to your project with the city, town, county or agency named above. Post Oak Land Clearing Denton offers and manages land clearing across Denton and the west and north of Denton County, with the work done by licensed and insured contractors.

Post Oak Land Clearing Denton

2281 N Masch Branch Rd, Denton, TX 76207
(940) 204-6191 · office@postoaklandclearingdenton.com
Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm; Saturday and Sunday, 9am to 2pm. Outside these hours, emergency calls only. Central time.