

Sturbridge Lakes Rules Reminder

Dear Sturbridge Lakes Homeowner,

As you know, Sturbridge Lakes derives a great deal of its charm and value from the natural wooded environment which is all around us. The trees and shrubs shield us from noise and pollution on Rt 73, and serve as habitat for an incredible variety of wildlife – including everything from bald eagles and blue heron, to fox and deer. The system of lakes at the center of this ecosystem is fed primarily by stormwater drains in the streets and rain runoff from our yards.

From the beginning of Sturbridge Lakes, rules have been in effect to preserve this unique environment, thereby preserving the values of our homes and the special memories of each generation.

Limits on the size of grass lawns and requirements that each lot keep some natural undisturbed vegetation, save our lakes from excessive fertilizer run off. We are living within a natural oak and evergreen forest, and so there are rules designed to keep the forest by saving trees. Such rules are not unique to Sturbridge Lakes, and have been enacted nearby towns for similar reasons.

Due to the importance of these rules, we wish to remind everyone of the basics:

Any changes to our properties (lawns, trees, shrubs, driveways, paths, sheds, etc) or to the exteriors of our homes (paint, siding, trim, shutters, doors, etc.), must first be approved by the SLA Architectural Committee. The architectural committee is charged with enforcing the following rules and others as they deem appropriate:

- In order to preserve the natural environment, each Owner shall not disturb naturally existing vegetation on an area equal to 20% of the square footage of the entire lot as shown on a survey of the lot. Approval for removing any existing vegetation must be obtained from the Architectural Committee prior to such removal.
- All homeowners must obtain approval prior to the removal of trees. If approved, replanting of indigenous trees may be required.
 - If trees are removed without prior approval, the homeowner will be instructed in all cases to replant indigenous trees.
 - In all cases in which replanting is required, the architectural committee must approve the species, size and locations of the new trees.

- Grass lawns may be installed or modified only with prior approval, and in no case may lawn space exceed 24% of the total lot size.
- Fences – The only approved fence is a natural wood, unpainted split rail fence, unless the property has a pool or is granted a different fence for unique safety reasons. Fences may not be any farther forward than the rear corners of the house. All fences must be approved prior to installation.

In each case, failure to receive approvals or other violations of the rules may result in the assessment of fines and directions to take corrective measures.

Below are the links to submit an application for removal of a tree or other alterations to the exterior of your home.

Work should not commence until approval is received via email and is posted on the website at thelaker.net ([Pending and Approved Applications](#)). Oral applications and oral approvals are not valid.

Application forms are at these links:

<http://www.sturbridgelakes.com/architectural/SLAtreeapp.php>
<http://www.sturbridgelakes.com/architectural/SLAarchapp.php>

Please keep a copy of these rules handy. When homeowners know the rules, misunderstandings and unnecessary work can be avoided.

Sturbridge Lakes Homeowners Association