

Cooperative Light & Power

Board Policy

II-13

SUBJECT: Tree Clearing

ADOPTED: 2/17/00

REVISED: 3/18/10, 5/16/19

REVIEWED:

Right-of-way vegetation management

Maintaining adequate tree-conductor clearance is vital to the safe and reliable operation of electric distribution systems. It is the intent of Coop Light & Power (CLP) to maintain proper tree clearance near overhead distribution lines for reasons of safety, to minimize interruptions of electric service, and to provide access for line operations. CLP will endeavor to provide cost-effective vegetation management services on a scheduled maintenance cycle that will ensure vegetation clearance from wires is consistent with Rural Utilities Service (RUS) and CLP specifications.

I. Planting or moving of trees

- A. Members are urged to consider the mature crown size of trees to be planted on their property. No tree shall be planted that will interfere with distribution lines when fully grown. Trees that will grow taller than fifteen feet shall be planted at least 20 feet to either side of the vertical plane with any wires. Trees planted closer than these distances may be removed by CLP without compensation to the landowner.
- B. Members and contractors should contact Gopher State One Call or Digger's Hotline to locate underground utilities to avoid damage to the lines and interruption of electric service when planting or moving trees. Members or contractors will be responsible for paying repair costs for lines that are damaged due to a dig-in.
- C. Members shall not plant trees over or near underground cable. Necessary repair of underground lines could cause damage to trees planted near the cable.
- D. Trees less than 10 feet in height growing within the overhead distribution line corridor may be moved or cut down by the member to reduce potential safety and service hazards. A member shall not risk

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his/her safety by cutting or moving trees taller than 10 feet located near power lines.

II. Tree removal and pruning

- A. CLP is responsible for maintaining tree clearance only on its portion of the service that is before the meter. All lines beyond the meter location belong to the member. Responsibility for tree clearance on these lines belongs to the member. (Examples: If the electric meter is on a pole, all lines from the pole to house, barn, garage, etc. belong to the member. If the meter is on the house, any lines from the house to other buildings belong to the member.) When the line belongs to the member, the hiring of a professional tree service is recommended to ensure member safety and prevent damage to electric lines.
- B. Trees that endanger secondary lines (that portion of the line located beyond the transformer) may be cut down or pruned by CLP to eliminate any immediate hazard. Covered secondary lines will not receive the same level of priority as uncovered lines. CLP may, at its discretion, offer a free line drop as an alternative to performing “requested” tree work near secondary lines.
- C. CLP will provide vegetation maintenance along primary lines (those between the substation and the secondary lines). The appropriate vegetation management practices will be utilized at the discretion of CLP to achieve the required line clearances until the next maintenance cycle.

Trees and brush growing within the right-of-way corridor outside of the home landscape will be removed by CLP. Generally, corridor widths will be established to provide a minimum clear zone at the ground line of twenty (20) feet to either side of the vertical plane of the wires. Trees outside the right-of-way corridor, which are dead, dying, structurally defective or otherwise pose a danger of falling on the lines (“hazard trees”), will also be removed.

Landscape trees are trees located within an established lawn area or are ornamental specimens growing within the home landscape. Generally, the main trunk of landscape trees should be eight (8) feet or more from the vertical plane of the wires. Landscape trees will be pruned to provide clearance until the next scheduled maintenance cycle. The pruning distance will depend upon the species, cycle length and location of the tree. Landscape trees requiring repetitive pruning or those which are disfigured while achieving necessary clearance may be selected for removal with the property owner’s consent.

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To protect the public from electric injury, a minimum safety clearance from uninsulated conductors shall be obtained on all trees, regardless of location. Safety clearance will be obtained with or without the property owner's consent.

- D. Property owners who request a variance from the specified tree clearances or maintenance policies may be offered an alternative such as reducing the clearances, using other methods, self-maintaining brush in corridors, pruning rather than removing, or re-routing the line. Alternatives that involve additional expense to the Cooperative will be paid for by the property owner in advance of the alternate maintenance being performed.
- E. During maintenance cycle work, small branches may be mulched or windrowed. Larger limbs and tree trunks will be left on site for disposal by the property owner.
- F. When work is necessary because trees have caused a power outage, or, because trees have died and present a hazard, all debris will be left for disposal by the property owner. Ash tree debris within a county where an emergency quarantine for Emerald Ash Borer exists will also be left on site.
- G. Generally, stump removal will not be performed by CLP.
- H. Member tree requests will be investigated to determine whether the tree poses a hazard to the lines. CLP may prune or remove trees that are hazardous to the wires. CLP may provide assistance by temporarily dropping secondary lines to accommodate member removal of a tree near the secondary. In situations where other non-electrical targets exist, or, where a tree poses little or no immediate hazard to the wires, the member may be required to share in the cost of requested tree work. Disposal of all debris from tree request work is the member's responsibility.

III. Chemical applications

- A. It is the practice of CLP to use herbicides to manage trees and brush within the right-of-way corridor. Tree growth regulators may be used to control the growth rate following pruning.
- B. Applications of chemicals to manage vegetation will be performed according to appropriate State and Federal regulations that govern their use.
- C. Property owners who request a variance from chemical applications may be offered alternatives that include using other maintenance methods, self-maintaining brush or rerouting the line. Alternatives that

involve additional expense to the Cooperative will be paid for in advance by the property owner.

IV. Notification

- A. Property owners may be notified before regularly-scheduled vegetation management work is performed.
- B. In some cases, door-to-door contacts, newsletter, door hangers, phone messages, and/or electronic communications explaining policies and practices may be used to notify property owners of vegetation management work.
- C. No advance notice will be given prior to off-schedule work, including the removal of hazard or storm-damaged trees or power restoration activities.