



Keeping Power Lines Clear

Why we cut trees along power lines:

- Trees too close to power lines are a major cause of outages for customers.
- Vegetation management work is required so we can keep the lights on for homes and businesses throughout the region.
- It is critical that we maintain the reliability of our electric system.
- We understand this work can cause concern for some individual landowners, and we are sensitive to that. But our first priority has to be reliable electric service for all of the people served by that power line, and for millions of other people in this region.
- Our increased vegetation management activity is already paying dividends for customers in terms of improving reliability.
- We are always willing to meet with property owners to hear their concerns and discuss the work we need to do to keep our lines safe and reliable.

Overview of Electric Grid Vegetation Work

PPL Electric Utilities operates about 32,400 miles of overhead power lines in its 29-county service territory in central and eastern Pennsylvania. These lines fall into several main voltage classes:

- 230-kilovolt and 500-kilovolt transmission lines – 1,351 miles
- 115-kilovolt and 138-kilovolt transmission lines – 299 miles
- 69-kilovolt transmission lines – 2,750 miles
- 12-kilovolt local distribution lines – 28,000 miles

Vegetation removal along our transmission lines is complete. The benefits of this work were demonstrated during Hurricane Sandy, when there were no tree-related outages on the 1,650 miles of high-voltage transmission lines where tree work had been done previously. Going forward, PPL will be maintaining these rights of way in their current condition. Likewise, no transmission outages were reported during the Blizzard of 2016.

Along local distribution lines, we have stepped up the amount of tree trimming and removal. These are the lines that deliver power from neighborhood substations to homes and businesses. They run along streets in cities, towns and neighborhoods.

We have increased the scope of vegetation management along these lines, especially those serving larger numbers of customers. In some locations, this work means clearing all vegetation in the right of way, including anything under or around these lines.

Most customers appreciate the value of tree cutting work. Our periodic customer surveys show that the vast majority of customers – 9 out of 10 – appreciate vegetation management work and recognize that it will improve their reliability.

Hazard Trees

These are trees just outside our rights of way that might be leaning, diseased, or otherwise pose a potential threat to a power line if they fell. In cases where we want to remove a danger tree, we will do so if our right-of-way agreement permits, or contact the property owner for permission if we do not have danger-tree rights. If a customer refuses and such a tree damages our lines, that customer may be liable for damage costs.

Questions & Answers about Vegetation Maintenance

What is the notification process for work on distribution lines?

Before we begin work, our contractors will canvass the areas where we'll be working to explain what will occur. If no one is home, we will leave a door hanger and a vegetation management brochure. Customers always can call us with questions. Contact information is provided on the door hanger.

Why remove trees? Can't you just trim the branches instead?

We recognize that some property owners may not want the trees removed under or near power lines. But we know that all customers want reliable electric service. We have to think of the millions of people served by the electric grid, and do the right thing to keep their lights on.

We try very hard to strike a careful balance – improving reliability for customers by keeping trees away from power lines while at the same time being sensitive to landowner concerns about vegetation management.

Why do you trim some trees that look like they are not even close to touching your lines?

When electric use is high, power lines significantly sag because of the large amount of current flowing through them. Also, windy conditions can cause trees to sway and wires to swing out and touch trees that are too close to the sides of the lines. We have to take the maximum sag and the swinging of lines in the wind into account when determining whether there is adequate clearance between the wires and the vegetation. We also have to consider the fact that trees can grow closer to lines every year.