



Homeowner Rights & Responsibilities

In performing vegetation management, tree crews must consider public welfare (that is, electric reliability) along with tree aesthetics. However, when these two desirable goals conflict, public welfare must take priority. The ultimate purpose of pruning and removing trees near our lines is to minimize electrical hazards and reduce power interruptions.

We hire professional vegetation management companies to assist with clearing trees and brush away from electric power lines. We hope the following information will help answer any questions you may have concerning the maintenance of our facilities.

Easements

To ensure reliable electrical service to our customers, we have either acquired or been granted a legal right to access lands owned by other parties in order to change or maintain our facilities. The right to access these lands for such purposes is called an *easement*.

Easements, which are legal contracts, are generally passed along with deeds of property ownership. If you want to know if your property includes an easement, or what terms the easement includes, check with your county Auditor's Office.

Ohio Revised Code provisions

Ohio law requires public utility companies to provide adequate service to our customers. To meet this obligation, we must ensure that our transmission and distribution lines are adequately maintained and free of obstructions. During routine inspections, we sometimes find tree branches and limbs growing into our transmission or distribution lines. Such situations may cause interruptions in electric service. In some cases, pruning the troublesome branches and limbs is enough to correct the situation. However, sometimes it is necessary to remove an entire tree.

Under Ohio law, we are entitled to appropriate property "including any trees...as is deemed necessary for the erection, operation, or maintenance of...cables, wires, and other necessary structures...or for rights of way over such land and adjacent lands for the purpose of access to any part of such land." - Ohio Revised Code Ann. 4933.15

Public rights-of-way

Our transmission and distribution lines and poles are often located within a public right-of-way, such as along a road or highway. If a tree located on a property along such public right of way grows into our lines, we are legally permitted to prune or remove the tree causing the obstruction. This is true regardless of whether we possess an easement across the property.

Emergency situations and immediate threats

If a line-clearance expert determines that an emergency safety hazard or a threat of immediate loss of electric service exists, we may decide to enter a property and commence tree pruning or removal immediately - without prior notice to the property owner. Generally, courts have agreed that the right of the general public to receive electric service supersedes the right of an individual property owner to have trees on his or her land left untouched.

Still need help?

[Contact us](#) with your questions.

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