

Tree Clearing and Trimming Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why does AEP Ohio clear trees away from power lines?

A. We want to provide safe, dependable electric service to our customers. Trimming trees helps us do that. Clearing our utility rights of way is necessary to keep vegetation out of our lines and equipment, and keep your lights on.

Q. How does clearing trees prevent power outages?

A. Trees and limbs lines are one of the most common causes of power outages. One tree limb can knock out power to hundreds or even thousands of customers. Trees also can delay restoration of service when outages occur.

Q. How will removing trees and limbs affect my service?

A. If trees have caused your power to go out or your lights to flicker, your service will improve. Clearing trees reduces outages and helps prevent outages when there is severe weather.

Q. How often does AEP Ohio clear trees near lines?

A. We have an aggressive four-year clearing cycle. This means you can expect to see trees cleared from the lines the serve your area every four years.

Q. Who does this work?

A. We use several licensed tree care companies, including Asplundh Tree Expert, Nelson Tree Service and Townsend Tree Service. All our contract tree-care companies are qualified to work around electrical lines and equipment.

Q. What is the contractors weekly work schedule?

A. Our contractors typically work a 40-hour week.

Q. Does AEP Ohio follow any guidelines when clearing limbs and trees away from lines?

A. We do, and we have our own professional foresters who oversee the work. We follow standards set by the International Society of Arboriculture, American National Standards Institute and the National Arborist Association.

Q. How does AEP Ohio decide where to clear trees?

A. Clearing is based on our four-year cycle. Circuits being cleared this year will be scheduled again in four years. If we see customers start to have outages from trees before the next cycle, we consider clearing these problem areas before the whole circuit is trimmed again.

Q. How much clearing is done?

A. During the regular cycle, the entire circuit is cleared. Crews will begin work at one end of the circuit and continue to the other end of the circuit.

Q. If my area was cleared recently, when will it be cleared again?

A. We'll return to clear the entire circuit again in about four years.

Q. Does the work involve just trimming or are trees also removed?

A. It can be both. Trees that grow directly under or near our lines may be removed rather than trimmed. If a tree is removed, our area utility foresters can help property owners select the proper tree for replanting.

Q. How do you decide how much to trim from my trees?

A. Each tree species is different. The American National Standards Institute and the International Society of Arboriculture have pruning guidelines that support the continued growth of healthy trees. Our contractors follow these pruning guidelines. Trees that are diseased or dying are removed.

Q. Do you use aerial saws or other mechanical tools to clear trees?

A. We use mowers and aerial saws in difficult-to-access areas as appropriate. Aerial saws generally are used in less populated and rural areas.

Here are examples of equipment AEP Ohio uses to help keep rights of way clear of trees and brush.



Jaraff



Aerial saw from helicopter.



Mower attached to tracked vehicle.



Another type of mower.

Q. Does AEP Ohio use tree growth regulators or herbicides?

We have safely used growth regulators for more than 15 years. These products slow tree growth after they're trimmed and help keep trees away from our lines for a longer time. Silver maple, elm, oak and ash are examples of fast-growing trees.

To ensure the safety of our customers and property owners, we use only herbicides registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other state and federal agencies. And we use only licensed and experienced contractors for this work. This helps ensure the products are applied as specified on the label.

Q. How is tree clearance being environmentally friendly?

A. We understand and appreciate that trees are important to the environment. We must balance this with the equally important need to provide reliable electricity to keep our customers' lights on. We always are willing to work with property owners to avoid conflicts about trees and power lines.

Q. How will I know when my trees are going to be trimmed?

A. Before we begin clearing, we reach out to area residents to make them aware our contractors will be trimming trees. We go door-to-door to alert you and discuss details of the work to be done. If no one is home, we leave an information card with a contact number you can call if you have questions or concerns. You also may receive a brief recorded telephone message when work is about to begin.

Q. How do I know which trees will be trimmed?

A. Our tree work planners identify the trees that needed trimmed and will notify you about the work that needs to be done.

Q. Does AEP Ohio remove debris after trees are trimmed?

A. We remove branches and limbs from maintained and landscaped areas when doing regular clearing. Wood is left for the property owner's use. In non-maintained areas, wood, branches and limbs are left to decompose naturally.

We do not remove cut trees or limbs during emergency power restoration, such as after storms. Our crews work quickly to safely clear trees from our lines and equipment and then move on to the next location. This allows our line crews to follow behind and get power restored as quickly as possible. In these instances, property owners are responsible for removing tree debris.

Q. Do you make communities aware of this work before it begins?

A. Just as with our customers, we want community leaders to know we will be trimming in their areas. Our community affairs managers reach out to local leaders and answer questions and help ease leaders concerns.

Q. Can I trim my own trees?

A. You never should attempt to trim or remove tree limbs near or adjacent to power lines. If you have a concern, please report it online at AEPOhio.com or call 1-800-672-2231. We use only trained and licensed professionals to clear trees away from our power lines. Serious injury or even death can happen to untrained individuals.

Q. What if a tree isn't in the right of way, but its branches are?

A. We will side trim the tree. If we think the tree can't be trimmed, we will ask the property owner's permission to remove it.

Q. What if I don't want my trees trimmed?

A. We have an obligation to provide you and your neighbors with safe, reliable power and keep your lights on. We also are committed to balancing the importance of trees with our equally important need to keep the power on.

Trees are important to the natural beauty to all our neighborhoods. It's easy to forget they can and do cause power outages – for individuals and for entire neighborhoods.

We want to and do work with property owners and communities to avoid and resolve conflicts about trees and power lines. And if you are planting trees near power lines, our utility foresters can provide information about the proper trees to plant.