

Tree and Vegetation Fact Sheet

If you notice a tree that is interfering with our power lines or poses a hazard, report it to 1-877-270-3938.

Hazardous conditions may include:

- The tree or branches are smoking, sparking, or burning on a power line
- The tree is an immediate hazard to the line (split, leaning, hanging over, uprooted)
- The tree is leaning on a hydro pole.

Do not attempt to prune or cut down a tree near power lines. A tree falling onto a power line can cause serious injury or death.

Why does NPEI trim trees?

When trees are close enough to potentially contact overhead power lines, public safety and the uninterrupted supply of electricity can be compromised. NPEI has a responsibility to ensure its electricity distribution system is safe and that it operates reliably. We must also ensure that our equipment can withstand extreme weather events such as high winds and heavy snowfall and ice.

Who is responsible?

NPEI is responsible to maintain tree clearance around all its distribution lines that are located on the public road allowance and easements. NPEI currently operates a vegetation management program that identifies tree pruning cycles that range from 4 to 5 years. Tree growth rates vary for different species and will require different pruning amounts to maintain a 3.0m (10 FT.) clearance from branches and primary power lines.

NPEI may also trim trees to provide clearance around NPEI owned overhead secondary service lines on private property. Customers are cautioned not to trim trees in proximity to power lines and Customers concerned about tree clearance within 1.0m (3 FT.) of their overhead service lines may request NPEI to trim trees to provide 1.0m of clearance at no cost to the Customer.

Per the Ontario Electricity Act, Section 40 (4), where necessary, NPEI will perform trimming of customer owned trees and vegetation to maintain clearance from the distribution lines, however, overall responsibility for the tree and removal of dead trees remains with the property owner.

Apart from maintaining clearance to NPEI owned assets, NPEI is not responsible for tree trimming or maintenance of trees and vegetation on customer property. This is the responsibility of the property owner.

Tree trimming and maintenance of clearance to customer-owned power lines on customer property is the responsibility of the property owner. We recommend that property owners hire a qualified contractor to do vegetation management work near power lines and contact us to temporarily disconnect the electrical service during maintenance. We will temporarily disconnect your electricity service for free once per calendar year.

Who is responsible for cleaning up the tree trimming debris?

It depends.

NPEI trims trees on a regular basis throughout our service territory. If we trim a tree on your property as part of our regular tree trimming program, our contractors will remove all the wood and debris from the job site.

You are responsible for the wood and debris from any other form of tree trimming, such as work related to storm damage or a customer request.

Caring for your property

Dead trees can pose a safety risk not only to nearby electrical infrastructure but also potentially to neighboring property, pedestrians and motorists. The Municipalities in our service territory all have Property Standards or Clean Yard Bylaws which identify the property owner's responsibility for maintaining their property and preventing any unsafe conditions. Further information on applicable municipal bylaws can be obtained by contacting your municipality.

Pick the right plants, pick the right place

When planting trees on your property, avoid planting trees near any power lines or electrical equipment, such as poles, or pad mounted transformers to ensure newly planted trees and shrubs never interfere with nearby power lines or electrical equipment.

If a tree must be planted near a power line on your property, first check with your municipality to ensure all by-laws are followed and that any easements on your property are respected.

The Ontario Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) has produced two informative guidelines; *Planting Under or Around Powerlines & Electrical Equipment* and; *Guidelines for Vegetation Management Around Powerlines*. Both of these and many other relevant safety tips are available on their website at: www.esasafe.com.

Call before you dig

If you are planning any yard work, such as planting trees, contact Ontario One Call to request cable locates to confirm there is no underground equipment, such as cables, in the area you intend to dig.

Locators will visit your property and mark any utility locates free of charge. Please provide at least five business days' notice. If there is a cable locate, we recommend selecting a more suitable area with a minimum of 3 metres distance away from the identified equipment.

To request a locate, call **1-800-400-2255** or submit an e-ticket at Ontario One Call.

Staying safe

For power lines for which you are responsible, be sure to use the help of qualified arborists only and keep in mind these potentially fatal mistakes:

1. Cutting a branch near a power line. This may bring it too close to the line as it falls and may cause an arc flash that could cause serious injury or death.
2. Cutting down a tree that could fall in the proximity (less than 10 metres) of a power line. Only professional arborists can expertly control which way a tree will fall when cut. Without proper planning and execution, this may cause the tree to fall onto or too close to the line, causing major damage to our equipment and can cause serious injury or death.
3. Electricity always wants to return to ground and it does not care how it gets there – it takes the path of least resistance. Using tools such as ladders or long-handled pruning shears too close to a power line could cause the current to run through the tool and potentially cause serious injury or death.