

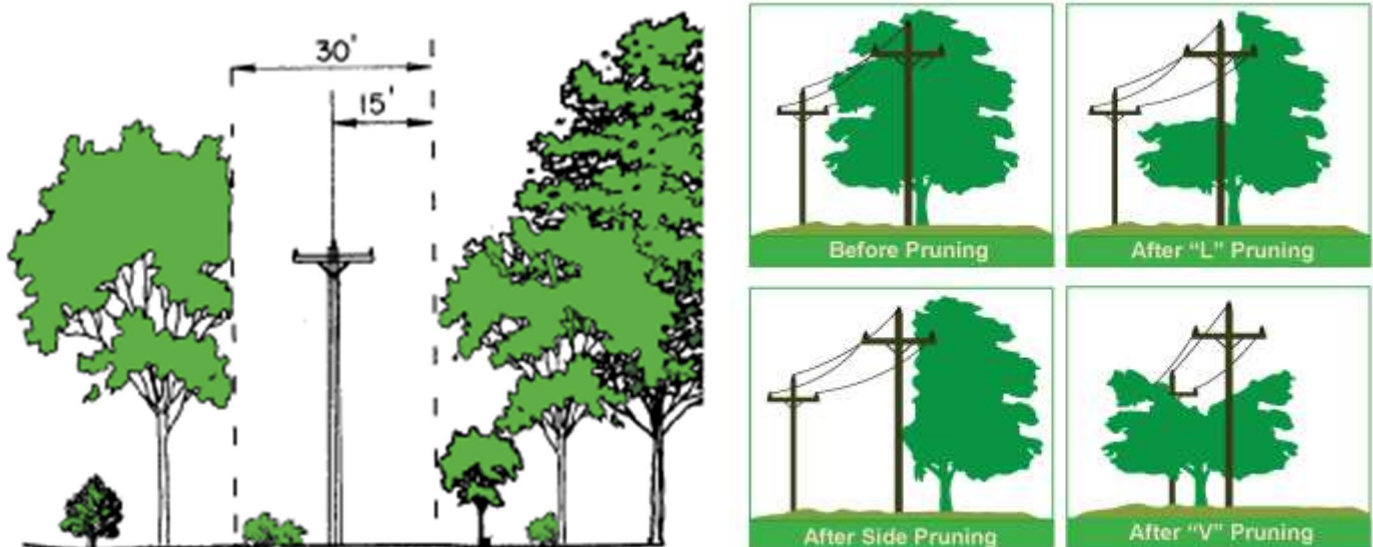


## TREE TRIMMING/VEGETATION CLEARING WITHIN AND AROUND POWERLINE EASEMENTS

### MEMBER COMMUNICATION AND GUIDELINES:

While we all love trees, managing trees and other vegetation within and near ICLP's powerline easements to make sure they do not interfere with our ability to provide power to you and other members is a never-ending task for our crews and contractors. In recent years, due to much drier and windy weather conditions, trimming and removal of trees and other vegetation within ICLP's easements has undertaken an even greater importance in order to minimize the potential of fires and other interruptions of power service. ICL&P is a local nonprofit member-owned electric cooperative funded by you and other members -- so we are all in this together. Accordingly, we are providing you with the following information concerning ICLP's general standards concerning trimming and removal of trees and other vegetation within and near ICLP's powerline easements to assist you in understanding ICLP's vegetation management requirements.

**Clearance:** Many trees can grow 10 feet or more in a five-year period. We must remove or prune trees to ensure 10-15 feet or more on each side of our overhead primary power lines remains clear. This also applies to trees that prevent our access to the lines. This effectively gives us a five to seven-year trimming cycle and improves safety and reliability. Some trees that grow faster may need to be taken back further to make it to the next trimming cycle. Our transmission lines that serve more than a hundred members and up to 1,000 in many cases, will be given extra attention.



**Why does ICL&P cut this far back?** Currently ICL&P has 1,092 miles of powerline to maintain. Having and following a good vegetation management program is essential to providing safe, reliable, and affordable power to ICL&P members. Tree limbs touching and burning on electric primary lines wastes a considerable amount of electricity and creates the potential for fire and power outages. Also, our linemen need adequate space to safely and efficiently work on powerlines without interference from tree limbs or other vegetation that may come into contact with powerlines or otherwise obstruct their work. Further, when fires occur, they could burn through our pole lines and rights-of-way and

can cause severe and costly damage. With a good vegetation management program, less damage is likely to be sustained. In addition, our pole lines are sometimes used as fire breaks and areas to start backburns by fire personnel and provide access into heavily forested areas. This is yet another reason for ICL&P and homeowners to do their part to protect their property.

**Pruning:** We use our best efforts to make sure your trees within or encroaching on ICL&P's powerline easements are pruned properly in areas that trees cannot be removed. As you see in the graphic above, there are many ways to prune trees. It is also important to cut branches at a fork to allow the cuts to callus over quickly with new bark. This reduces the risk of insect or disease damage and minimizes the subsequent growth into our power lines. Our staff and/or tree trimming contractor will work with you and determine if affected trees can be pruned or need to be removed.

**Removal:** While pruning may work for certain trees in specific areas, others will have to be removed if they are growing within 10-15 feet of our primary power lines. This prevents them from falling on our lines during extreme weather and interrupting your power. Most importantly, it minimizes the chance that broken power lines could endanger, perhaps fatally, people and animals on the ground. We will try our best to work with you if you have concerns about removal, but we must put safety and reliability at the forefront. ICL&P reserves the right to make the final determination.

### **What about trees that are outside of the Right-of-way/Easement?**

We will remove danger trees that are outside of the right-of-way/easement if they will reach the line when they fall. These can include trees that are dead or dying and/or severely leaning towards the powerline. This is for our benefit and yours. Our policies and easements allow us to trim or remove any trees adjacent to, but outside, the easement that may endanger or interfere with our facilities.

### **What can the member do if he/she does not want us to cut as much as the 15' clearance?**

ICL&P attempts to notify all members of its ongoing tree trimming maintenance program. If you receive notification of our crews in your area and would like for us to trim/cut less than 15 feet back from the powerlines, you must notify us in time to do so. We will be happy to talk with you to discuss options, if any, however if we can't trim enough of the vegetation back to stay on a 5–7-year cycle and must come back on a more frequent interval, we will have to calculate an additional tree trimming cost and invoice you for such services. We cannot put this additional cost on all the members.

**Member Notification:** Our agreement to provide you power gives us permission to maintain the right-of-way and power lines whenever it is needed. Unless we encounter a dangerous or emergency situation that requires immediate action, we will attempt to notify you by phone or mail in advance when we schedule routine maintenance.

### **How does ICL&P know when a tree needs to be trimmed or removed?**

Subject to modification for outages and other exigencies, the following priority will typically be followed in determining when and where tree trimming, or removal activities will be performed:

1. Reports of electrical outages caused by trees.
2. Areas where trees have been damaged by storms or fires.
3. During the regular tree-trimming cycle.
4. Periodic inspections by ICL&P personnel.
5. Reports from customers indicating potential tree/power-line problems.

### **What do I do if I see a tree, limb or other vegetation touching or interfering with a powerline?**

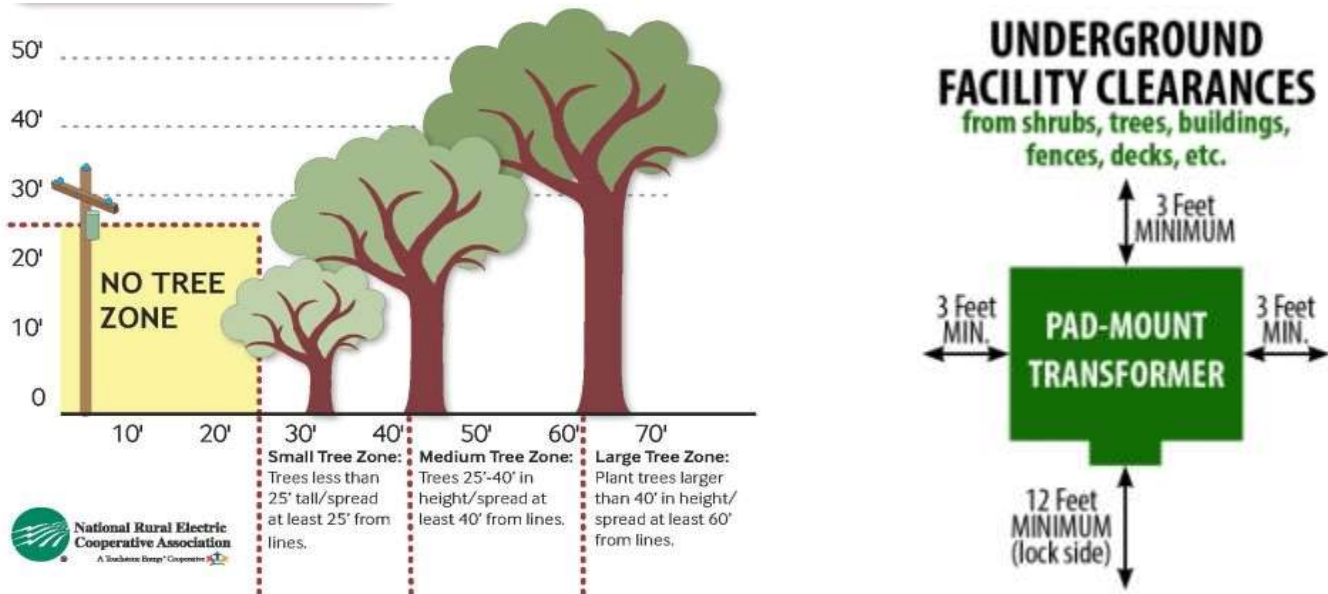
If you notice a dead or dying tree near power lines, or a tree with branches growing very close to or touching power lines, please contact us immediately at 208-983-1610. Do not attempt to remove the tree branch(es) yourself. If it's an emergency, we will come right away to assess the situation and resolve it, if needed. If it's not an emergency, we will prioritize it into our tree trimming schedule. If there are sparks that could lead to a fire, please don't hesitate to call 911 before calling us.

**DANGER - WARNING - NEVER A) TOUCH ANY POWERLINE OR ANY VEGETATION TOUCHING A POWERLINE, OR B) REMOVE OR ATTEMPT TO REMOVE ANY VEGETATION FROM ANY POWERLINE. SEVERE PERSONAL INJURY, DEATH, OR DAMAGE TO PROPERTY MAY RESULT.**

### What do I do if I have a danger tree near ICL&P's lines?

Please call ICL&P at 208-983-1610 and we will send someone out to look over the tree. We will work with you and/or your contractor to make sure that the tree is taken down safely.

**Tree Placement:** You can help us provide reliable power and minimize the cost of power to you and other ICL&P members by considering ICL&P's vegetation management requirements when you are planting trees and other vegetation near ICL&P powerlines and easements:



### Can a private property owner or commercial tree-trimmer obtain help in trimming or removing trees near powerlines, including service lines (transformer pole to house)?

ICL&P may assist property owners and/or their commercial contractors, at their request, with the trimming and removal of trees that are near or may affect ICL&P powerlines or other facilities. Please call the office at 208-983-1610 if you or your contractor have questions. A representative of ICL&P will make an inspection and explain to the property owner or contractor what we can do to assist. ICL&P's assistance may include one or both of the following activities:

- The temporary rerouting, de-energizing or removal of electric wires that may be hazardous to workers. ICL&P will coordinate with the property owner or contractor the time the work can be done.
- The trimming of the tree so that it can be safely removed or trimmed by the property owner or contractor. All wood will be left on the property owner's premises. ICL&P is not responsible for cutting wood to size or piling brush. The customer or contractor will be responsible for removing brush that is blocking sidewalks or driveways.

**Service and secondary lines:** These wires are designed to be more resistant to tree contact and usually carry 120/240 volts. However, we will trim branches that prevent the service wire from hanging freely, or we will add a sleeve to the service wire to prevent tree damage. Before you or your contractor trim or remove trees close to service lines (pole-to-home wires), call 208-983-1610 to ask us to turn off power. We turn off electricity temporarily and restore it when your work is complete - at no charge.

### **Do you use chemical treatment as part of your right-of-way maintenance program?**

We are investigating the use of approved chemical treatments as this is a key component to easement maintenance. ICL&P is looking to use safe & approved herbicides to help unwanted weeds, brush, and trees from growing back in the rights-of-way. This is typically applied 1-2 years after the initial clearing has been done. If vegetation is small, some areas can be controlled through the use of chemicals without first clearing, reducing the overall cost of maintenance. Treating the easement also enhances wildlife habitats by promoting grasses and other ground cover that birds, deer and small animals prefer. When doing so we practice precision application and use buffer zones to provide an extra measure of precaution by avoiding gardens, flowers, and other plants important to you.

### **What will be done with the trees and/or branches and brush after they are trimmed/removed?**

If a tree falls during a storm, our crews will be working 24/7 to trim or remove any tree that is interfering with power restoration as quickly and safely as possible and the cleanup will be the property owner's responsibility. During routine maintenance, if the area is accessible by our vehicles and in an improved area such as a yard, we will use the chipper to chip up branches and haul them away or leave them for the member if requested. If possible, we may utilize a skid steer or excavator with a mulching head on it to clear limbs and branches in terrain that allows us to do so, and the chips will be spread out over the ground. In restricted access areas, unimproved and/or wooded areas, we will leave small piles of brush and limbs outside of the easement that the member can then remove or burn at their discretion in the future. Danger/hazard trees located outside of the easement that are a threat to the electric system (such as dying, diseased, leaning, or storm damaged trees) shall be stubbed, cut or appropriately topped to avoid outages, and clean-up will not be provided. Any further restoration/maintenance of the site will be the property owner's responsibility.

### **Why don't you relocate your overhead lines to underground?**

Like many other decisions in life – it is question of cost. About 50% of our new construction is put underground as they are typically shorter spans to a residence. With rocky terrain in a lot of our service territory, overhead power lines are typically the most cost-effective option. For underground line, we require the member to trench and install conduit before we will pull in underground cable. While underground lines have many positives, they are not a fix all. Roots can be a determining factor when it comes to underground lines that can cause issues in the future. In the event of outages, power takes longer to restore with underground cabling. In addition, underground lines typically have a life span of 30-40 years, so it has to be replaced more frequently than overhead lines. ICL&P is willing to relocate overhead lines to underground if a customer is willing to pay the cost. Contact ICL&P for an evaluation and price estimate.

**Member Cooperation:** Easement management in part depends on our members. As a local member-owned electric cooperative, we respect the rights of members who own property affected by our easements. (We understand because we live here too.) Please remember that tree trimming and vegetation management are crucial to keeping the lights on for you and your neighbors.