



FACT SHEET: TREE TRIMMING NEAR POWER LINES

Why does AES trim trees near power lines?

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) requires AES Ohio (AES) to inspect and clear at least 20% of their power lines annually. This is critical to maintain reliable and safe electric power.

How much will be trimmed or cut?

Federal OSHA standards require 10 feet of line clearance. However, that is a minimum standard and does not mean that only 10 feet of material will be trimmed. Trimming is species-specific, taking into account the growth rate of trees and the length of time before trimmers will return to the same area. Typically, limbs and branches will be trimmed to allow at least 12-14 feet of clearance on all sides of power lines. Poles are also cleared from the ground up.

Does AES trim along service drops?

No. Service drops, which are the wire(s) connecting your home to a AES distribution line, are considered the homeowner's responsibility and are not part of AES's line clearance program.

Who does the trimming? What standards do they follow?

AES usually hires private contractors to conduct routine tree trimming. Fitzwater Tree & Lawn Care is currently one of those contractors. Whether trimming is performed by AES or a contractor, they generally follow standards developed by the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) and the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA).

How will I know where tree trimming is scheduled to take place?

Work areas may include power lines within public rights-of-way and on private property. The city of Oakwood monitors trimming within public rights-of-way, but has no power to monitor trimming on private property.

- **Public rights-of-way:** Oakwood's City Ordinances require that AES obtain an annual permit to trim trees within public rights-of-way (streets, alleys, sidewalks, tree lawn areas, etc.). The permit requires AES to inform the city of work areas in public rights-of-way.
- **Private property:** When work is planned on private property, AES or their private contractor should provide notice to each affected property owner at least 2 days in advance. Notices are usually hung on the door or mailed, and include contractor contact information. The city is not informed of work areas on private property.

Are tree trimmers allowed to enter my property?

Power lines on private property are usually located in utility easement areas, which gives AES or their contractors the right to enter and maintain those lines. Utility easements are filed with the

Montgomery County Recorder's office, and copies are typically kept by AES. You may also wish to consult an attorney if you have specific questions about your property rights.

What happens to the cut material?

Trees are considered a homeowner's property. Small debris may be chipped and removed by AES's contractor as part of jobsite cleanup, but larger limbs and branches are typically cut, stacked, and left on site for the property owner to use or dispose. Disposal can be done through the city's monthly greenwaste collection, or by dropping off the material in the yard debris dumpster at the Dog Park parking lot.

Who can I contact if I have questions about trimming that will be done on my property?

If you have questions about work at your property, always contact AES's contractor first. They should be willing to meet you at your property to discuss the work. If that does not resolve your concerns, you should contact AES's line clearance department. If you are still unsatisfied with their responses, you can call City Horticulturist Brian Caldwell at (937) 298-0775. The City Horticulturist may be able to influence the manner in which certain trimming is completed, but does not have power to issue orders that conflict with PUCO or OSHA regulations. To file a complaint about utility-based tree trimming, contact the PUCO at (800) 686-7826.

What can I do to prepare for tree trimming?

Homeowners should be certain that they completely understand the work to be done on their property. It is a good idea to take pictures of the trees prior to trimming and discuss with AES or the contractor the trimming that will be done. Most tree trimmers will try to work with customers regarding their concerns with trimming when possible.

What can I do to avoid having AES trim my trees?

Advance planning is key. The following are steps you can take to help avoid having AES trim trees in your yard:

- When planting trees in your yard, select a location away from power lines;
- Check with a nursery about the correct species of trees for planting in the space you have available;
- Trim all trees and bushes that are under and near power lines each year to keep them from growing toward the lines.

For more information about recommended trees to plant and where to locate them in relation to power lines, you may always contact the City Horticulturist at (937) 298-0775.

KEY CONTACTS:

AES Line Clearance Department
(888) 582-3213
<https://www.aes-ohio.com/tree-trimming>

Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO)
(800) 686-7826
www.puco.ohio.gov

Fitzwater Tree & Lawn Care
(937) 548-1705
www.fitzwatertreeandlawncare.com

City of Oakwood Dept. of Leisure Services
Brian Caldwell, City Horticulturist
(937) 298-0775
Email bcaldwell@oakwood.oh.us