

MOUNTAIN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.  
Policy Bulletin 10-20

SUBJECT: Standards for Right-of-Way Maintenance

POLICY:

I. PURPOSE

To set forth environmental standards for right-of-way maintenance programs to assure a minimum adverse impact on the environment in balance with budget considerations; and to assure good acceptance of Cooperative programs by property owners, members and the public. This practice applies to maintenance of transmission and distribution rights-of-way.

II. RIGHT-OF-WAY CLEARING AND RECLEARING SPECIFICATIONS

A. Aerial primary line (7.2kV/12.4kV) will be cleared a width of 40 feet, 20 feet on each side of a centerline determined by the centerline of the electrical facilities as installed. Trees outside the 20 feet limit will be side trimmed, unless dead or leaning heavily toward line.

B. Danger trees (dead, dying, diseased, washed out) in or along the right-of-way, which also present reasonable risks to the Cooperative's lines and facilities, shall be removed or pruned to the extent that the hazard is removed.

C. Pruning techniques utilized shall be in accordance with established, sound horticultural principles. These principles include natural or lateral pruning, drop crotching, and directional pruning. Branches or limbs, which must be removed, are to be pruned back to a supporting branch or to the trunk of the tree whenever possible.

D. Minimum tree trimming clearances between conductor and trees or limbs are as follows:

1. Aerial Primary Lines (7.2kV/12.4kV): Minimum tree trimming clearances between primary phase conductor and trees or limbs are as follows: This applies to shade and lawn trees, towns, and subdivisions or as directed by the Cooperative.

Top Clearance	8 feet	10 feet (fast growing species)
Side Clearance	8 feet	10 feet (fast growing species)
Overhang Clearance	10 feet	12 feet (fast growing species) (Remove if possible)
Example of fast growers: poplar, soft maple, elm, sycamore, willow, and pine		
Example of slow growers: oak, hard maple, cedar, fruit trees, and hickory		

2. Open wire secondaries (less than 600V) will be free of tree contacts with a minimum clearance of five (5) feet. Other secondaries and service drops shall be pruned to remove any obvious line-damaging limbs. These are limbs of a size substantial enough that through continued rubbing, or pressure due to weight, will likely lead to service interruptions.

E. Down, span and other guys shall be free of weight, strain or displacement due to pressure caused by contact with tree parts. Vines shall be cut loose from poles and guys.

F. Adequate side trimming to maintain 20 feet clearance from centerline will be done simultaneously with hand clearing, bush hogging, and chemical application. Tree limbs should not be left hanging over the line.

G. Brush and logs will be removed from "clean and maintained" areas; that is, an area which is regularly maintained free of brush and logs. Brush and logs will be removed within a minimum of five (5) feet from water's edge of creeks/streams to insure water flow. It will be the Cooperative's responsibility to dispose of brush and logs. Brush and logs may be left in the right of way that does not fit the above categories.

### III. PRACTICE

#### A. Reclearing Methods:

1. Hand Cutting: This method may be used on all system rights of way. Complete reclearing may be done in remote areas. Selective hand cutting shall be done in rights of way within 50 feet of houses and other buildings. Where power line crosses major highway in such manner that right-of-way corridor is visible from the highway, selective cutting and screening shall be done. Major highways include all U.S. and State highways and do not include paved secondary roads. Selective hand cutting means leaving small bushes, shrubbery, ornamentals, etc. and screening means leaving and/or planting small trees to hide right of way.

2. Brush Hog: This method may be used on all system rights of way. Selective hand cutting shall be done instead of brush hogging within 50 feet of houses and other buildings and selective hand cutting and screening may be done instead of brush hogging where power line crosses major highway in such manner that right-of-way corridor is visible from the highway.

3. Chemical: Types of chemicals and locations where used shall meet the recommendations of the appropriate governmental agencies. Low volume applications of chemicals that effect tree growth by contact and do not transfer or threaten desirable tree growth may be used. Site selection for chemical applications will consider the environmental impact to the area.

4. Special and/or Non-Chemical Treatment Methods: Special and/or Non-Chemical Treatment Methods are available provided per Policy Bulletin 10-21: Right-of-Way Maintenance: Special and/or Non-Chemical Treatment Methods. To ensure that any increased costs from non-standard right-of-way treatments are not subsidized by other members, the additional cost for said non-standard right-of-way treatments will be paid for by the individual customer(s) desiring the non-standard treatment per Policy Bulletin 10-21.

#### B. Shade Tree Trimming:

1. Trees, such as shade and lawn trees, that have been "rounded over" in past pruning procedures should be naturally or "drop crotch" pruned. "Round over" trimming method will not be done except where absolutely necessary to satisfy the tree owner, because it creates an unhealthy, weak sucker attachment at the pruned end of the branch. Regrowth is usually very rapid and the unsightly appearance promotes undesirable public attention.

C. Brush and Logs Disposal:

1. Remote Areas: Brush and logs may be left as cut in remote areas.

2. Developed Areas: Brush and logs will be removed from "clean and maintained" areas; that is, an area which is regularly maintained free of brush and logs. Brush and logs shall be piled out of sight on rights-of-way within 50 feet of houses and other buildings. In developed areas where brush and logs cannot be piled out of sight, brush and logs will be removed. The Cooperative will not remove stumps. Brush and logs may be left in the right of way that does not fit the above categories.

3. Creeks/Streams: Brush and logs will be removed within a minimum of five (5) feet from water's edge of creeks/streams to insure water flow.

D. Property Owners:

1. Easements: Right-of-way easements permit the Cooperative to maintain rights of way. Where a written easement is not available, the Cooperative's standard maintenance rights apply as stated below:

The Cooperative's standard easement way to maintain its electrical facilities is a width of 40 feet, 20 feet on each side of a centerline determined by the centerline of the electrical facilities as installed. The Cooperative has the following maintenance rights; to enter said premises to inspect line, to perform necessary maintenance and repairs: to remove from the right-of-way strip, at any time, any trees, structures or other obstructions that may endanger the proper maintenance and operation of lines and remove trees of any species that the Cooperative determines will grow at maturity to a height that will endanger the proper maintenance and operation of said lines; to trim or remove and to keep trimmed or removed dead, diseased, weak or leaning trees or limbs outside of the right-of-way strip which, in the opinion of the Cooperative, might interfere with or fall upon the Cooperative's facilities within the right of way strip from center line on each side. The Cooperative also has ingress and egress rights over and across other member lands as necessary to reach said right-of-way strip.

2. Contacts with Property Owners: A bona fide attempt shall be made to contact all the property owners before reclearing is done. When crews see that the property owner is using right of way for growing Christmas trees, ornamental trees, or shrubbery the property owner shall be contacted before any reclearing is to be done.

3. Protection of Property: All right-of-way reclearing shall be performed in such manner as to protect the property owners inside and outside the rights of way. When property damage occurs, full restoration and/or settlement shall be made promptly.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY

A. The Construction and Operations Superintendent will be responsible for seeing that this practice is followed and for seeing that the best possible relations are maintained with property owners.

**EFFECTIVE:** April 1, 2011