



TREE TRIMMING IMPROVES SERVICE FOR ALL

By Tim Stewart, CEO/Manager



Clark Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

One of the things I like best about spring is the natural beauty that surrounds us. We are fortunate to have so many trees that offer beauty, shade, and a habitat for all sorts of birds and other wildlife. I'm sure you appreciate spring for much of the same reasons.

At Clark Electric Cooperative, we strive to balance maintaining beautiful surroundings and ensuring a reliable power supply by keeping power lines clear in rights-of-way (ROW).

While we recognize and appreciate the beauty of trees, there are three main benefits to tree trimming in right-of-way areas. However, before touching on the main reasons, let me explain what a "right-of-way" is and how it may impact you. A right-of-way is the land we use to construct, maintain, replace, or repair underground and overhead power lines. Rights-of-way enable the co-op to provide clearance from trees and other obstructions that could hinder the power line installation, maintenance, or operation. The overall goal of our vegetation management program is to provide reliable power to our members while maintaining the beauty of our community. Proactive vegetation management benefits co-op members in three tangible ways.

Safety First and foremost, we care about our members and put their safety and that of our lineworkers above all else. Overgrown vegetation and trees pose a risk to power lines. For example, if trees are touching power lines in our members' yards, they can pose grave danger to families. If children can access those trees, they can potentially climb into a danger zone. Electricity can arc to a nearby conductor like a tree. A proactive approach also diminishes the chances of fallen branches or trees during severe weather events that make

it more complicated and dangerous for lineworkers to restore power.

Reliability Of course, one of the biggest benefits of a smart vegetation management program is reliability. Strategic tree trimming reduces the frequency of downed lines causing power outages. Storms can cause extensive outages that can take days to restore. Did you know that trees are the number one reason for electric disruptions?

Affordability As you know, Clark Electric Cooperative is a not-for-profit cooperative, and that means we strive to keep our costs in check in order to keep our rates affordable. This extends to our approach to vegetation management. If trees grow too close to power lines, the potential for expensive repairs

also increases. Here at Clark Electric Cooperative, we perform our vegetation management annually to help maintain the right-of-way. This cost accounts for approximately \$700,000 this year alone. We recognize that people generally don't like to have trees trimmed or cut. However, this is a necessity to provide good reliability, affordability, and safe delivery of electricity. Effective tree trimming and other vegetation management efforts keep costs down for everyone.

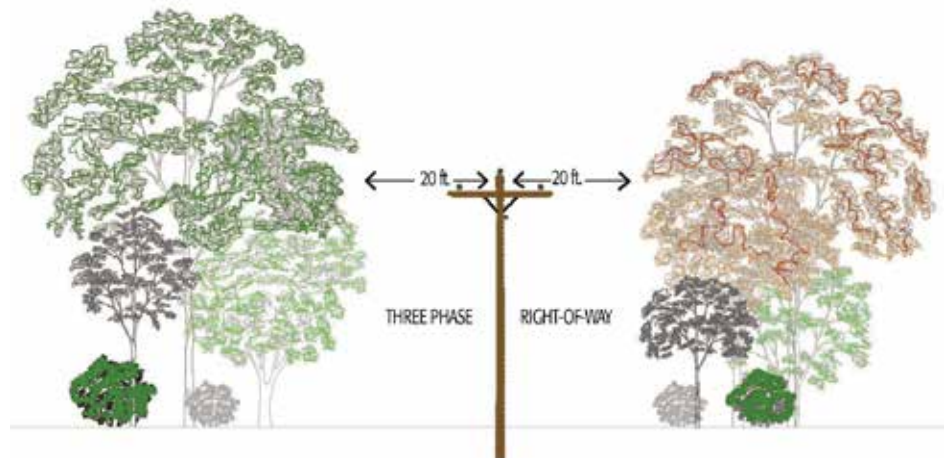
Our communities are a special place. We appreciate the beauty trees afford, but we also know our members depend on us to provide reliable energy. Through vegetation management, we are better able to keep the power lines clear, prepare for future weather events, and secure the reliability of the grid.

Consider Power Lines When Planting Trees

The rest of this month's article is devoted to planting trees and safe distances from power lines.

Whether you're planting a single tree in the front yard or several thousand trees to start a plantation, it's important to consider the species of trees and the location in which you plan to plant them. This is especially important if you are planting trees near overhead power lines.

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Tree Trimming

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Many people plant trees too close to power lines. They think that the trees will never get tall enough to grow into the power lines, or they simply forget to look up before they plant them.

Most trees will grow tall enough to touch power lines faster than you think. So take time to research your tree selection or consult with your local tree nursery for advice on which trees are appropriate for your landscaping area.

As the trees grow they can come into contact with the power lines and create power outages or momentary interruptions. However, the greatest concern is the safety risk that can be created when children climb trees near power lines.

As we move through the spring season and into summer, please take some time to consider a few things when planting, especially around power lines.

1. Clark Electric Cooperative requires 15 feet of clearance on both sides of the line for single-phase lines and 20 feet for three-phase lines.
2. Be sure to plant your trees far enough away from power lines so that when the trees are fully grown, there will still be 20 feet of clearance to the power line without the need for trimming.
3. Remember, if you chose to plant trees in the right-of-way or too close to the right-of-way, your trees may need to be trimmed or cut some day, and that day may come sooner than you think.

If you have trees that appear to be growing into power lines, contact Clark Electric Cooperative at 1-800-272-6188. Never try to prune them yourself. We have skilled professionals trained to safely prune and trim trees for electric line clearance.

RESPECT THE ORANGE SIGNS: MOVE OVER, SLOW DOWN IN WORK ZONES



Every state has laws that require drivers to slow down or switch lanes if possible when they pass emergency vehicles and, in many states, transportation maintenance, work trucks, and other authorized vehicles as well. These are often referred to as “move over” laws. Failing to comply can result in fines and, in some states, jail time.

For many people, there aren’t enough hours in the day. Because of that, many people use drive time to be productive. They might call their boss, text their best friend, or apply mascara.

Multitasking can be an effective use of time, but not while driving.

WisDOT reports that Wisconsin sees nearly 2,000 work crashes a year.

Although this reflects incidents that took place in road construction zones, know that accidents, injuries, and deaths can happen in any roadside work zone, including utility work zones.

That is why we ask you to help keep our crews safe by slowing down and following any other instructions—including moving over to give them space—anytime you see orange warning signs and cones that lead up to a work zone.

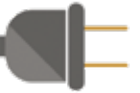
Cars or trucks that speed through a work zone not only endanger workers on the ground, driving too fast or not moving over can also put an elevated lineworker in danger by causing the bucket he or she is in to move or sway.

Lineworkers already have enough to contend with by working way high up on power lines while out in the elements. Their profession consistently places on the Bureau of Labor Statistics most dangerous jobs. Do your part; please don’t add noncompliant drivers to the mix.

For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



MAY IS ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH



Simple Steps Lead to a Safe Home

At Clark Electric Cooperative, we recognize Electrical Safety Month every May, but we also know the importance of practicing safety year-round. From our co-op crews to you, the consumer-members we serve, we recognize that everyone has a part to play in prioritizing safety.

According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, thousands of people in the United States are critically injured or electrocuted as a result of electrical fires and accidents in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable. Electricity is a necessity, and it powers our daily lives. But we know firsthand how dangerous electricity can be because we work with it 365 days a year.

To us, safety is more than a catchphrase. Keeping co-op employees safe is our priority, and we want to help keep you and all members of our community safe as well. That's why you'll see Clark Electric Cooperative hosting safety demonstrations at community events and in schools throughout the year, to demonstrate the dangers of electricity. We discuss emergency scenarios, such as what to do in a car accident involving a utility pole and downed power lines. We caution students on the dangers of pad-mounted transformers and overloading circuits with too many electronic devices.

Electricity is an integral part of modern life. Given the prevalence of electrical devices, tools and appliances, we'd like to pass along a few practical electrical safety tips.

Can You Dig It?

- ⚡** An underground utility line is **damaged once every 9 minutes** because someone didn't call 811.
- ☎** Call 811, the "Call Before You Dig Number," at least **3 business days** prior to digging.
- 💧** 811 locators **do not detect** underground sprinkler systems, invisible fences, data communication systems, private water systems, or gas piping to a garage.
- 🔄** Even if you have previously had underground utilities marked, **utilities can shift**, so it's best to call before starting a new project.
- 🚩** Once **all of your utilities** have been located, then you can start your digging project!

Learn more at SafeElectricity.org

- **Frayed wires pose a serious safety hazard.** Power cords can become damaged or frayed from age, heavy use or excessive current flow through the wiring. If cords become frayed or cut, replace them, as they could cause a shock when handled.
- **Avoid overloading circuits.** Circuits can only cope with a limited amount of electricity. Overload happens when you draw more electricity than a circuit can safely handle—by having too many devices running on one circuit.
- **Label circuit breakers to understand the circuits in your home.** Contact a qualified electrician if your home is more than 40 years old and you need to install multiple large appliances that consume large amounts of electricity.
- **Use extension cords properly.** Never plug an extension cord into another extension cord. If you “daisy chain” them together, it could lead to overheating, creating a potential fire hazard. Don't exceed the wattage of the cord. Doing so also creates a risk of overloading the cord and creating a fire hazard. Extension cords should not be used as permanent solutions. If you need additional outlets, contact a licensed electrician to help.

We encourage you to talk with your kids about playing safe and smart around electricity. Help them be aware of overhead power lines near where they play outdoors.

Our top priority is providing an uninterrupted energy supply 24/7, 365 days per year. But equally important is keeping our community safe around electricity.

Contact Clark Electric for additional electrical safety tips or if you would like us to provide a safety demonstration at your school or upcoming community event.

ANNUAL MEETING REMINDER



Clark Electric
Cooperative's
Annual Meeting
May 10, 2023

Neillsville American Legion
Business meeting starts
at 9:30 a.m.



BEWARE OF SCAMS

We have been notified that some members have received calls from scammers claiming to be representing the cooperative and asking for credit card information. If you receive such a call, hang up immediately and call Clark Electric Cooperative to report the scam. **DO NOT** give out your credit card information over the phone.

Remember: Clark Electric Cooperative DOES NOT ask for credit card information over the phone.

Clark Electric Cooperative's office will be closed
Monday, May 29, for Memorial Day.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

The location of your thermostat can impact your HVAC system's ability to maintain an ideal indoor temperature. For maximum accuracy, thermostats should be placed in the center of the home, away from air vents, plumbing pipes and exterior doors. Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your thermostat, which can cause the HVAC to run longer than necessary. Avoid installing thermostats in rooms that tend to feel warmer or colder than the rest of the home. Do not place furniture in front of the thermostat, which can block air flow and result in inaccurate readings.




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**Clark Electric
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Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.