

## Herbicide use

Our forestry professionals and contractors are trained and certified in the use of herbicides. Herbicides maintain cleared areas beneath our electric lines and are used to treat the stumps of removed trees to prevent resprouting.

Herbicides are used in areas with heavy brush to kill the vegetation, but leave it standing to create animal habitat and suppress future tree growth.

Our forestry planner or contract employee will attempt to notify property owners if herbicides will be used on their property, as required by state regulation.



## Know what's below Call before you dig

Michigan Public Act 53 requires anyone — a business owner or homeowner — to contact MISS DIG to have public utility lines marked before digging. There is no charge for this service.



Operators at MISS DIG take calls from contractors, homeowners and others and pass the information to member utilities.

When MISS DIG notifies Consumers Energy, we send a worker to locate and mark — with small flags — the approximate locations of all Consumers Energy underground electric and gas lines.

Calling 811 helps protect you and your neighbors from injury or loss of energy service. Failure to comply with the MISS DIG law can result in liability for resulting injuries and damages.

Call 811 three full working days before you dig. For details, visit [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com) or [www.missdig.org](http://www.missdig.org).

## Maintaining our property and securing necessary work permits

As one of the state's largest landowners, we take care of more than 12,000 miles of electric and natural gas lines on land we own. In addition, we maintain easements along another 86,000 miles of natural gas and electric lines.

Some people believe that because we are a public utility, our land is public. Consumers Energy's land is private property and not open for public use without permission. Hunting, dumping, burning, operating off-road vehicles, planting trees and other activities are strictly prohibited.

Since the late 1800s, it has been our practice to secure an easement to install, maintain and expand overhead and underground electric lines and underground gas pipelines on property not owned by Consumers Energy. Many of our lines are also installed in road rights of way pursuant to state law.

While easements vary, they run with the title of the land and allow our facilities to remain in place regardless of future ownership of the land.

When required, we obtain permits from federal, state, county and municipal agencies before any work is done. We also try to inform customers of our plans to trim or remove nearby trees.

## Smart planting

No trees should be planted near power lines. However, many trees are attractive additions to your yard and, under normal conditions, will not grow tall enough to interfere with our distribution lines.

Avoid planting tall-growing trees such as the following near or under power lines:

- Silver Maple
- Norway Maple
- Oak
- Colorado Blue Spruce
- White Spruce
- Most pines
- Willows

To help communities better understand tree clearances around power lines, Consumers Energy provides tree planting tips, photo examples of tree trimming, descriptions of vegetation management methods, minimum power line clearances as well as a section on trees and safety at [www.consumersenergy.com/forestry](http://www.consumersenergy.com/forestry).

**In the event of downed wires,  
gas emergencies, security concerns  
or vandalism, call  
Consumers Energy at  
(800) 477-5050.**



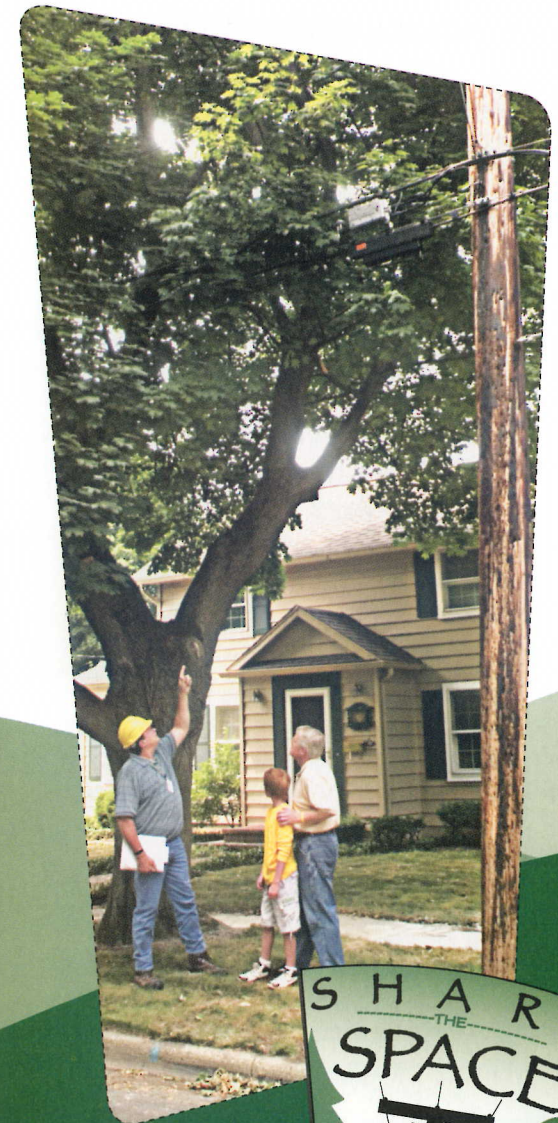
**Consumers Energy**  
*Count on Us*

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**Consumers Energy**

*Line clearing and safe, reliable electric service*





Our pledge to you

We strive to provide safe, reliable electric service to our customers while making a sincere effort to minimize the risk to the health of trees and shrubs in the communities we serve.

Trees and safe, reliable electric service

Trees are part of Michigan’s natural splendor, providing summer shade and a golden glory in the fall.

It takes skilled management to ensure that the trees we delight in and the electric power we depend on can happily coexist.

Left unattended, trees that grow near electric lines can be dangerous and cause power outages. In fact, trees are involved in one-third of all outages.

In this brochure, you’ll find tips and resources to help you plant the right tree in the right place.

You’ll also learn how our certified and trained foresters work to ensure that Michigan’s trees and Michigan’s energy continue to share the same space safely and dependably for decades to come.

Keeping on schedule

Our purpose is to promote electric reliability and safety for our Michigan communities and neighbors. That’s why it’s important that we maintain an efficient electric line-clearing plan. This helps reduce the number and duration of power outages.

Professionalism and guidelines

Our foresters are members of the Utility Arborists Association and the Michigan Forestry and Parks Association, which are chapters of the International Society of Arboriculture. Here are some of the guidelines we follow:



Trees are involved in about 30 percent of all power outages.

- Trees next to electric distribution lines are removed or trimmed a safe, clear distance from the lines. The distance can depend on the location and type of tree, electric voltage and other factors.
- The safety of our employees and the public, particularly children, may require removal of a tree. For example, a tree may be removed because it is under or too close to the line, dead, dying, damaged or at risk of falling. Some trees can be a constant hazard, requiring us to remove them.
- Our goals are achieving adequate clearance, helping the tree heal and directing future growth away from electric lines.
- In wooded areas, trimmings will be turned into brush piles to provide cover for wildlife.

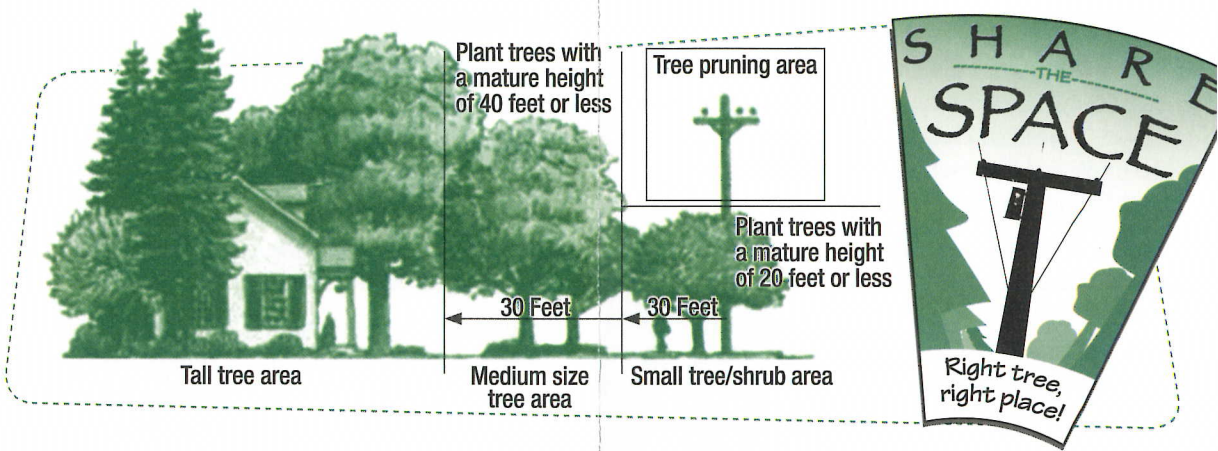
What to expect

If you have received notice, either mailed or left as a door hanger, and have trees on your property near electric lines, it is likely the trees will be trimmed or removed. If you have questions about the work intended for your property, please call the number on the letter or door card.

We clear areas to industry-accepted specifications depending on the voltage of the electric line. In many situations, we’ll remove all trees within our approved area.

Here are the minimum clearances necessary to minimize tree-related outages. Sometimes it is necessary to obtain greater clearances than the amount listed below.

Electric Line Type	Voltage	Minimum Clearance
Distribution	4,800-14,400	10 feet from wire in yards and other maintained areas
Transmission	46,000	15 feet on both sides of pole line in
		15 feet from wire in yards and other maintained areas
Transmission	138,000	40 feet on both sides of pole line in undeveloped or unmaintained areas
		45 to 60 feet on both sides of pole/tower line depending on construction style
Transmission	345,000	75 feet on both sides of structure



Trees and safety

- Power lines are not insulated. If you touch a power line, you will be severely injured or killed. Always assume a power line is energized and dangerous.
- Three working days before planting or doing other digging projects, call 811 so that underground utilities are marked and you can work safely. This service is free.
- If a tree branch breaks off and lands on an electric line, call us immediately at (800) 477-5050. Do not touch the branch or wire.
- Do not cut down trees or branches near power lines.
- Stay clear of power lines when removing any object caught in a tree, such as a kite or balloon.
- Stay at least 10 feet away from power lines when using a ladder.
- Do not allow children to climb trees that are anywhere near overhead power lines.
- Before you plant a tree, check to see if it will grow too close to overhead lines as it matures.



Our foresters are ISA-certified and follow established utility line-clearance specifications.

Vegetation management methods

At Consumers Energy, we use various vegetation management methods. **Line-clearing crews** are the most common method, but we also use **heavy equipment** and **herbicides** to control vegetation near electric lines.

Line-clearing crews

One of our forestry planners will identify tree and brush work that needs to be done. Consumers Energy then contracts line-clearing projects to several contractors, who use qualified line-clearance arborists.

Workers are required to follow our work specifications. In lawn areas, they usually chip all brush. Larger wood from line clearing will be cut into manageable pieces and left on site.

In areas that are not maintained, the brush will be piled in windrows along the power line area, creating good habitat for wildlife and helping to suppress future tree growth. When trees are removed, stumps are left and cut as close to the ground as possible.

Heavy equipment use

The most commonly used heavy equipment are Hydro-axes. They are usually used in unmaintained areas.