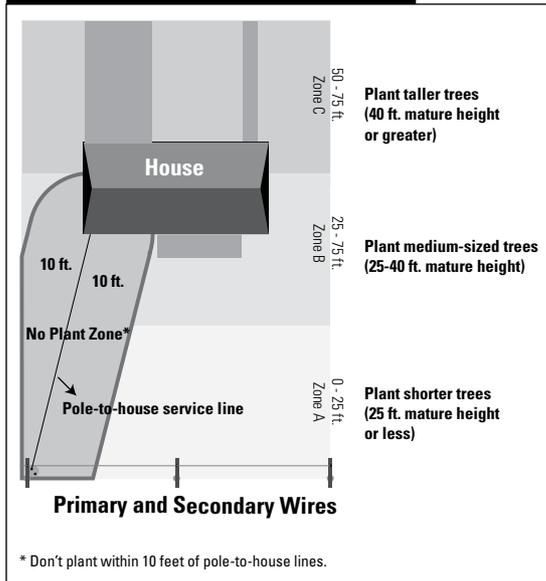


FIGURE 3



Responsible tree planting

To help ensure electric service reliability and public safety in your neighborhood, use the “zone approach” when planting new trees (see Figure 3). No trees should be planted within 10 feet of the service line to your home or business, which is the line between the pole and the house or building. Larger trees must be planted even farther away from the primary and secondary wires that run along backyards, alleys or roadways. Generally, the taller the tree will become, the farther it should be from any power lines.

Xcel Energy recommends that only shrubs or low-growing tree species be planted near power lines. For more information and a list of recommended tree species, call us at **1-800-895-4999** to get a free copy of our *Right Tree* guidebook.

If you have underground utility lines, be careful not to locate any tree or shrub in front of electrical equipment installed at ground level. When power outages occur, our crews need to locate and access equipment quickly. Obstructions will delay the restoration of your service and could result in damage to your plantings.

Call before you dig

Remember that underground utility lines can present serious safety risks when planting trees and shrubs. Call the appropriate number below for the exact location of underground electric and natural gas service, cable television and phone lines before you start digging.

Colorado, call 1-800-922-1987

Michigan, call 1-800-482-7171

Minnesota, call 1-800-252-1166

New Mexico, call 1-800-321-ALERT

North Dakota, call 1-800-454-5555

South Dakota, call 1-800-781-7474

Texas, call 1-800-245-4545

Wisconsin, call 1-800-242-8511

Thanks for your cooperation

Clearing branches and limbs away from power lines will help ensure that we can provide safe, reliable electric service to your community. Xcel Energy thanks you for your cooperation in our tree-maintenance operations.

For more information, or to obtain a copy of our *Plant a Better Future* brochure so you can learn more about tree planting and selection, visit us at xcelenergy.com or call **1-800-895-4999**.



Home Solutions Center
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TREE PRUNING NEAR POWER LINES



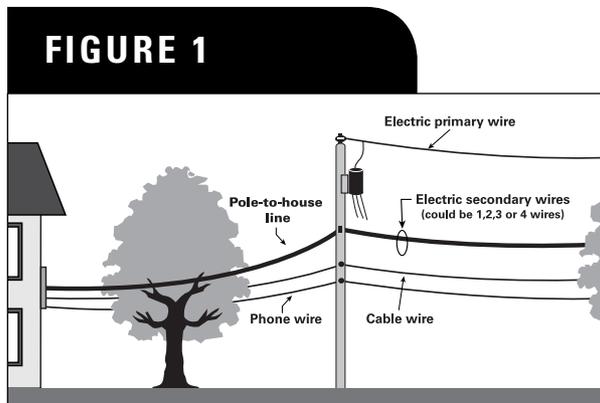
Keeping your power on

Trees can be a beautiful addition to your landscaping. However, trees growing near power lines can be a safety hazard and are a major contributor of electric service interruptions nationwide. That's why Xcel Energy prunes trees near power lines in your community. Tree pruning is the selective removal of branches that are not an adequate distance from power lines, or that will grow too close to the power line before the next maintenance cycle. Our goal is to provide safe, reliable electric service, while also taking the best possible care of one of your community's valuable natural resources.

We attempt to maintain trees on appropriate cycles as a proactive approach to preventing power outages. We also respond to emergency situations such as storm restoration. Xcel Energy contracts with nationally recognized tree professionals, who prune trees according to industry-accepted guidelines and safety standards. Our tree-maintenance program is based on a number of factors, including the voltage of our lines (see *Figure 1*), power line construction, tree growth rates and the historic impact trees have had on electric service in your area.

Clearance depends on voltage

Primary wires, usually located at the top of a pole, can serve hundreds of customers and carry 4,000 to 35,000 volts of electricity. So for reliability and safety reasons, Xcel Energy's goal is to prevent trees from coming into contact with them. Only qualified personnel can prune trees near these wires.



Secondary wires, located just beneath primary wires and sometimes strung in groups of twos, threes or fours, carry lower voltage—usually 240 volts—to fewer customers. Not all branches near these wires need to be removed. Only qualified personnel can prune trees near these wires.

Pole-to-house lines have the least impact on large-scale power outages, so Xcel Energy does not trim for clearance along these lines, except when hazardous conditions exist. Remember, pole-to-house lines are fully energized and extremely dangerous. You may hire a qualified professional tree trimmer to perform this work in some areas. Call Xcel Energy at **1-800-895-4999** to request that your pole-to-house line be temporarily disconnected while you trim your trees or have pruning performed by a professional arborist.

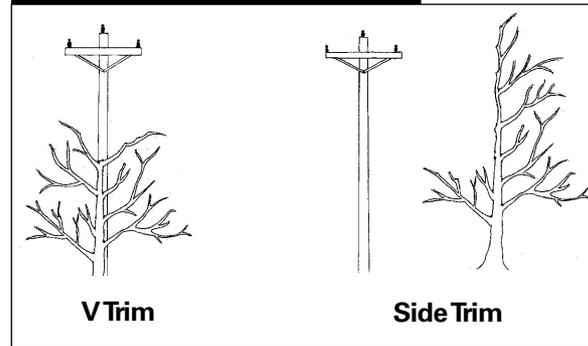
Other wires, including those for telephone and cable television, also may be located on the poles that lead to your home. These wires are typically located beneath Xcel Energy's facilities. *Xcel Energy does not trim for clearance around these wires.*

Tree growth rates impact clearance

Each tree species grows differently, so Xcel Energy prunes more from fast-growing trees than from slow-growing ones. The required clearance varies depending on the type of tree and its growing conditions as well as the voltage and construction of the power line.

Some fast-growing trees, such as cottonwoods and willows, have weak, brittle wood and often cause power outages during storms or strong winds. They require more clearance from power lines than some other trees. Overhanging branches are a major cause of power outages, so our primary goal is to remove branches that overhang the wires. We also target the removal of fast-growing tree species (such as cottonwoods, willows, poplars, elms and silver maples) that are located directly under primary wires while the trees are still relatively small. You may receive a request for permission from Xcel Energy or our contractors to remove such trees.

FIGURE 2



Tree pruning techniques

When we must prune trees away from power lines, we use a method known as “natural directional pruning.” Natural directional pruning is recognized as a best practice by many non-utility organizations, such as the International Society of Arboriculture and the National Arbor Day Foundation. For many years running, the National Arbor Day Foundation has recognized Xcel Energy for its tree maintenance program.

If the tree is planted directly under power lines, its branches will be pruned from the center of the tree, creating a “V” shape (see *Figure 2*) in many situations. Entire branches are removed to encourage the tree to grow away from the lines rather than directly into them. Side pruning is done when only a side portion of the tree is growing into the power lines. When side or V pruning is necessary, even proper pruning techniques may leave trees with an unnatural appearance. In some cases, it may be better to remove the tree and start over with a more compatible tree.

Tree removal

When circumstances call for removal, an Xcel Energy representative or contractor will contact you. In an emergency or a hazardous situation, however, that may not be possible.

When Xcel Energy removes a tree, we cut it as close to the ground as practical, but we do not grind out the stump. We typically treat the stump with an EPA-approved herbicide to prevent resprouting. **Large limbs and logs will be cut into manageable lengths and left on site.** Of course, planting the right tree in the right place avoids pruning and tree removal altogether.