

# *Princeton Municipal Light Department*

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## **Vegetation Management and High-Risk Tree Removal Plan & Policy**

Princeton Municipal Light Department recognizes and appreciates that trees are valuable assets to our landscapes and to the quality of life in our area. However, this must be balanced with the constant threat to the line worker's and public's safety, the reliability of the ratepayer's electric service, and the health of Princeton's roadside trees. It must be noted that trees and tree branches are the most frequent causes of power outages to our electric distribution system. Trees adjacent to PMLD's rights-of-way must be kept pruned and clear of the power lines according to this policy. This helps us provide a safe and reliable supply of electricity to our members. The goal of this policy can be simplified using the acronym:

### **C.P.R.T.**

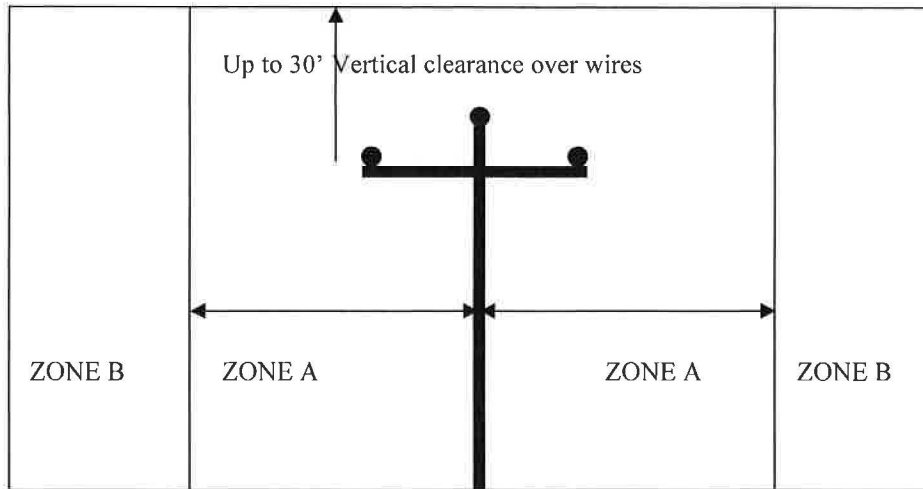
**C**rew Safety – trees that are near or touching wires are dangerous to crews that work on the wires.

**P**ublic Safety – trees touching the wires can conduct dangerous high voltage electricity to the ground, creating a high-risk step potential for the public and pets.

**R**eliability of the electric system – trees are directly and indirectly responsible for more outages than any other source.

**T**ree health – trees are burned externally and internally when they touch high voltage wires. When we trim, we strive to make proper cuts to encourage quick healing and prevent “suckers” from growing. If it is determined that to maintain the proper clearances from the PMLD electric system, a tree would be left in an unhealthy condition, that tree will be removed.

- Often PMLD will in conjunction with the DPW, choose to mow the road prior to starting the vegetation management work, to save hundreds of costly man-hours of ground trimming. Mowing should be done a minimum of every three years to maintain the height of the vegetation directly beneath the electric system right-of-way.
- Branches and brush debris will be chipped, cleaned up, and hauled away the same day, unless equipment failures or scheduling conflicts arise. The work areas shall be left as clean as they were before the work was performed.
- Large limbs and wood that are not able to be chipped will be left in manageable lengths for the general public to take on a “first come first serve” basis. Very large unmanageable tree butts will be removed with heavy equipment.
- The following page outlines PMLD's “blueprint” for vegetation management and high-risk tree removals.
- PMLD will deliver “door knocker” notices to each home on roads being trimmed each year, and post information on social media, notifying residents of the upcoming work.



**Horizontal Clearance Area**

A 20-foot area (**Zone A**) that is measured 10 feet out from each side of the pole line.

**Zone A (Town Property)**

**Vegetation Management**

- Any tree 8 inches and under in diameter (Measured 5' up the trunk), that is growing within zone A, and determined to conflict with the pole or wires within 5 years, shall be removed during the vegetation management cycle.
- Trees not subject to removal shall be trimmed in such a manner to achieve a five-year "no contact" period with the PMLD electric system.
- Trees shall be trimmed to establish a vertical clearance of up to 30 feet over the PMLD electric system to account for ice, snow and wind load.

**High Risk Tree Removals**

- High risk trees that are over 8 inches in diameter, as identified by PMLD to be endangering the PMLD electric system, shall be reported to the Princeton Tree Warden for approval to remove.

**Zone B (Private Property)**

**Vegetation Management**

- Trees growing in **Zone B** but encroaching into **Zone A**, shall be trimmed back to the trunk or a major limb.
- Any saplings 4 inches and under in diameter, as identified by PMLD to be high risk, shall be removed, unless objected to by the property owner.

**High Risk Tree Removals**

- High risk trees, as identified by PMLD to be endangering the PMLD electric system, shall be reported to the property owner. A plan shall be drafted to address the tree, which may include removal or trimming. Any disputes will be reported to the proper authorities.