

# Understanding Line Clearing Efforts

*Improving service reliability and promoting  
the health of your trees.*



*A unit of American Electric Power*

**Trees are an important part of our environment. That's why Indiana Michigan Power (I&M) is committed to balancing the importance of trees with the equally important need to provide you reliable electricity safely.**

**To do this, we must control the growth of vegetation around power lines and other energized equipment. Tree limbs that come into contact with power lines are the most common cause of brief and prolonged power outages, especially during storms. Just one tree limb can knock out electric service to dozens of families up to several miles away. Interfering trees and brush also can delay the efforts to restore service that has been interrupted.**

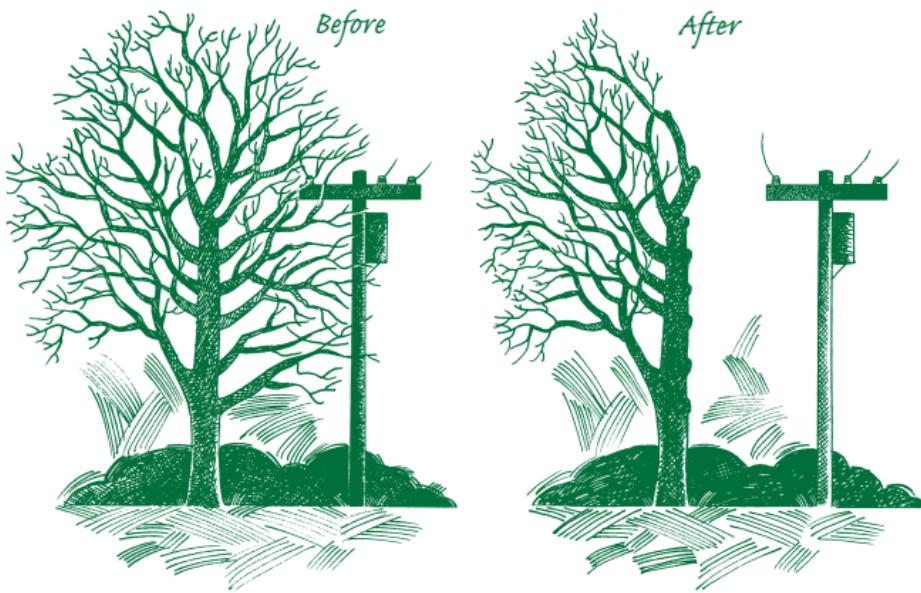
**Under the direction of a team of professional foresters and certified technicians, we follow trimming standards set by the International Society of Arboriculture, American National Standards Institute and the Tree Care Industry Association. These standards help provide reliable electricity safely and most importantly, promote the health and well being of your trees.**

## Line Clearance

I&M is concerned about trees that threaten the safe and reliable delivery of your electric service. That is why we have a comprehensive program to manage trees and brush. Our experience and knowledge of line clearance requirements and growth patterns of tree species allows us to better spot hazards, as well as potential problems.

Before tree crews even enter an area, an I&M forester will tour the community to determine the work to be done. He or she looks for trees growing directly under power lines, overhanging branches and limbs, hazardous trees, or those trees that have the potential to contact power lines in the near future. Overall, it is I&M's objective to remove obstructions to provide at least 10 feet of clearance from the line.

Customers should never attempt to trim or remove tree limbs near or adjacent to power lines. If you are concerned about a tree that may be in contact with a power line, contact I&M either by phone (see back panel) or through the Internet at [www IndianaMichiganPower.com](http://www IndianaMichiganPower.com).

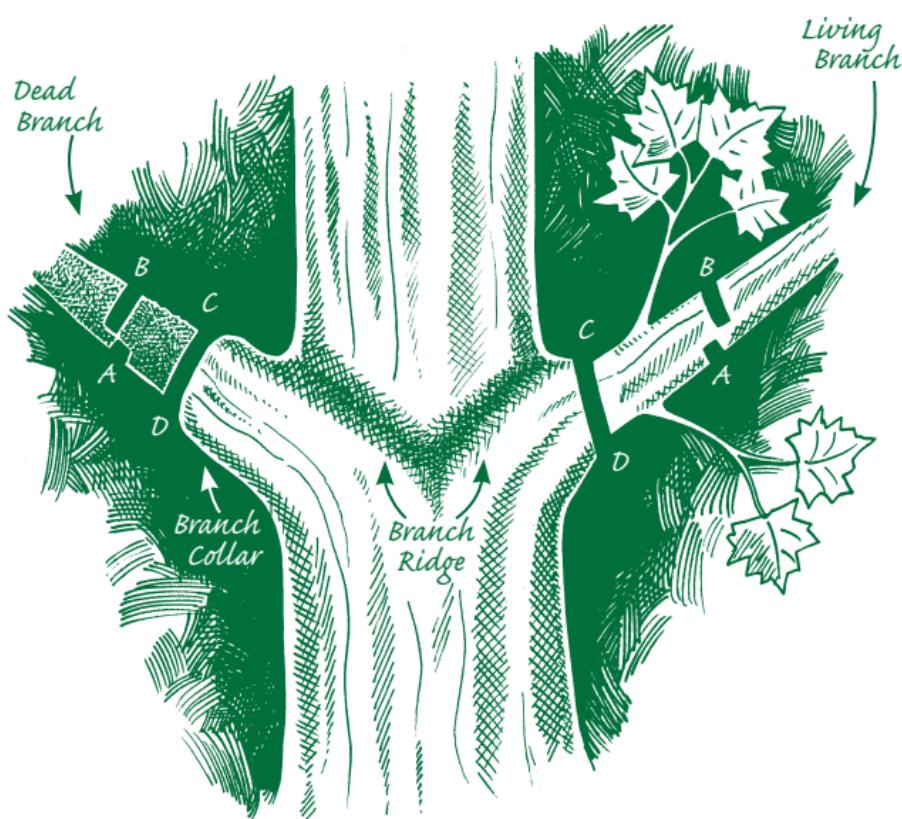


*This illustration shows how trees growing too close to power lines may be trimmed. I&M's objective is to remove obstructions to provide at least 10 feet of clearance from the line. This allows for access to perform routine maintenance and helps prevent contact during most storms. In addition, the cuts allow for some re-growth until the tree is trimmed again.*

## Trimming and Removal

As stated earlier, I&M follows trimming standards set by the International Society of Arboriculture, American National Standards Institute and the Tree Care Industry Association. This means that we utilize practices that protect tree health while directing future growth away from the power lines. Trees near the power lines that cannot be trimmed according to these guidelines should be considered for removal.

In addition, brush may be managed through a number of means...it may be mowed, hand cut or treated with US EPA registered herbicides.



This illustration shows how I&M certified technicians correctly prune limbs. The first cut (A) is made from the bottom of the branch, up  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the way through. The second cut (B) is made down through the branch until it drops, effectively removing the weight mass of the limb. The final collar-cut (C to D) is made without peeling the bark down the trunk. The branch collar is a swollen area at the base of every branch fork. By cutting just outside the collar, the tree will 'seal' the cut surface in just a few years.

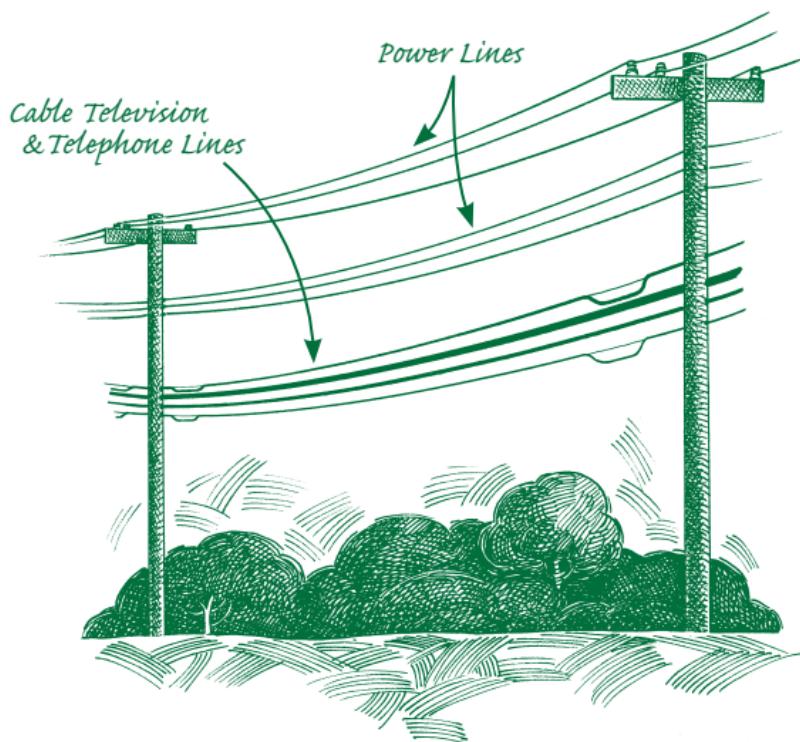
## Safety is a Priority

Any tree, even a strong healthy one, in close proximity to a power line can present a safety hazard. I&M will take **immediate** action to remove the tree if it identifies a "climbable" tree too close to a power line. In addition, other circumstances may require a tree to be removed. In those cases, I&M will work with the property owner and/or the local community prior to the tree's removal.

A power line taken down by a tree branch, or through other means, poses a serious safety hazard. It is impossible to tell by looking at a downed wire if it is energized, and therefore dangerous. Keep in mind that there are circumstances under which cable television and telephone lines can become energized if an electrical line comes into contact with these lines. If you ever see a downed line, consider it to be an electric line and energized. Stay away from it and call I&M.

## Helping Identify Lines on a Pole

For many of our customers, it is difficult to determine or identify what lines on a pole are electric lines and what are cable television and telephone lines. As a general reference, power lines normally are the highest lines located on a pole. The following illustration helps identify the different facilities located on a utility pole.

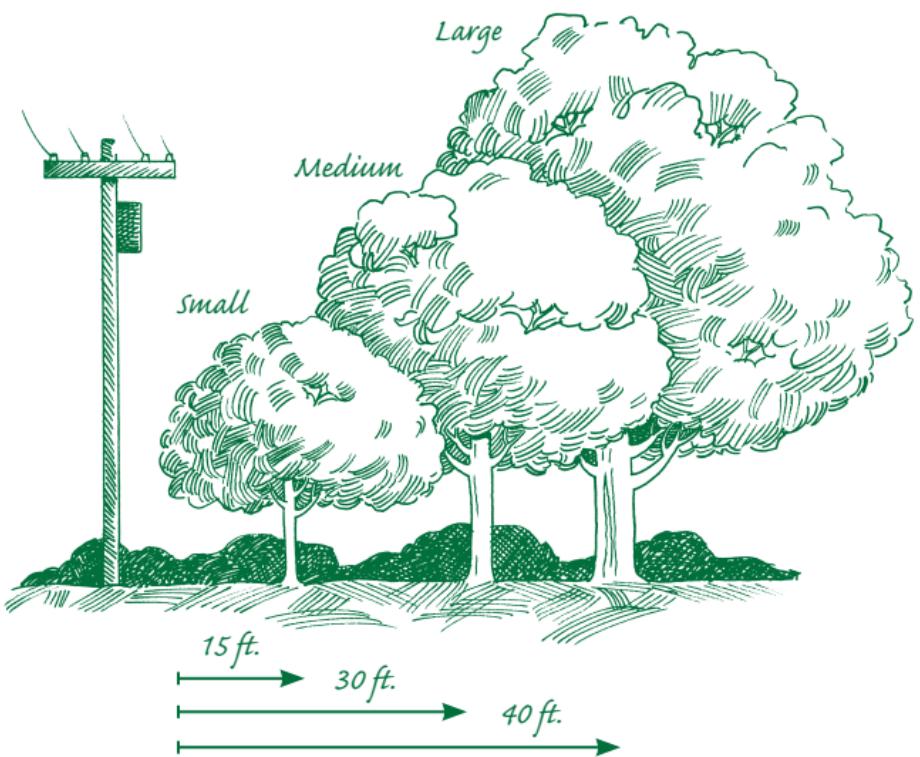


## Planning Guide

Choosing the right place for the right tree is an important decision. By taking the time to plan before you plant, you'll be rewarded with some beautiful results and avoid problems in the future.

When you plant new trees, I&M suggests looking above, below and around the intended area. Today's sapling can be tomorrow's problem, causing an electrical outage or accident. Avoid buying the fastest-growing or the cheapest tree you can find. It may be a costly mistake you'll pay for later. Fast-growers are traditionally weak-wooded trees that can be damaged easily during storms. These trees are hazardous if located adjacent to dwellings or power lines and will require repeated pruning.

In general, I&M recommends only shrubs be planted under power lines. Small variety trees need to be planted at least 15 feet away from power lines, medium variety trees at least 30 feet away and large variety trees at least 40 feet away from power lines.



For underground transformers (those green or gray metal boxes in back or front yards), I&M asks that vegetation be planted at least 10 feet from the side of the box with the locked door and at least 3 feet away from all remaining sides of the transformer.

## Before You Dig

Whether you're digging to plant a tree or for any other purpose, I&M offers the same advice: Be sure you know the location of any underground utility facilities before you dig.

Hitting any type of utility line guarantees loss of that service and possible loss of life. And it can be avoided through a simple telephone call. To locate lines before you dig, call:

- In Indiana, call 800-382-5544 two working days before digging
- In Michigan, call 800-482-7171 three days before digging

Trees and landscaping can be a significant investment. You will want to protect this investment from possible damage or removal during an emergency by keeping plantings away from locations where crews likely may work. I&M generally is not responsible for replacing trees it must remove to ensure safety and service reliability. In fact, I&M encourages customers to check with the company before placing anything such as swing sets, decks, porches, or pools, etc., within the area of underground and overhead power lines. Encroachments to these areas present serious safety hazards and may be subject to damage, removal or relocation at your expense.

## Jobsite Cleanup

Branches and limbs generated on a daily basis by our contract tree crews are disposed of in the most economic and practical manner possible. During I&M's regular line-clearing activity, branches and limbs within maintained or landscaped areas will be removed, while wood will remain on the property for the resident's use. In non-maintained areas, wood, branches and limbs will remain either to decompose naturally or for the resident's use. Customers are reminded that during emergency power restoration, I&M crews clear trees from our facilities and move to the next location. I&M does not return to remove wood, branches and limbs.

When it comes to tree maintenance, I&M wants to work with you. That is why we appreciate your efforts to plant the right tree in the right place. Doing so can help us avoid line-clearance efforts and help you protect your investment.

For more information regarding I&M's line-clearing program, please contact us at one of the following telephone numbers:

Indiana ..... 800-311-4634  
Michigan ..... 800-311-6424

For more information about tree planning and maintenance, visit [IndianaMichiganPower.com](http://IndianaMichiganPower.com) or one of the following websites:

[isa-arbor.com](http://isa-arbor.com)  
[arborday.org](http://arborday.org)  
[treecareindustry.org](http://treecareindustry.org)

For information on the following subjects, go to the web and search for:

- Tree Species Guide
- Conserving Energy with Trees



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