

THE CITY OF
BARDSTOWN
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



MUNICIPAL ORDER NO. M2022-05

WHEREAS, the City of Bardstown strives to efficiently operate its electric utility for the health, convenience, and economy of its residents and businesses; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bardstown has determined there is a need for a vegetation management policy to be a guide to the operation of vegetation trimming for its electric utility.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED by the City Council of the City of Bardstown, Kentucky, that the following Vegetation Management Policy for the Electric Department be adopted:

CITY OF BARDSTOWN ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT

Vegetation Management Policy

General Info

The City of Bardstown Electric Department acknowledges that trees in semi-rural and urban settings are a vital element of the quality of life. However, when tree limbs come in contact with power lines, it is dangerous and electric service can be disrupted. Fallen trees and tree limbs that become entangled in lines, wind-blown branches that cross the lines as they fall to the ground, and tree limbs that grow into power lines are a major cause of outages to the Electric Department's electric system. Not only are such service interruptions inconvenient for customers, but they can also threaten public safety when power is interrupted to vital services such as medical and retirement facilities, traffic signals, fire alarm systems and customers with life-support systems.

As part of the Electric Department's obligation to provide reliable electrical service to customers, the Electric Department has developed a vegetation management program designed to keep tree limbs and shrubs safely away from power lines. The Electric Department will trim all trees and vegetation around its energized power lines, utility poles and pad mount equipment. All tree trimming will be done to obtain minimum clearance with due regard to current and future tree health and symmetry.

This policy strives to further define and enhance the language of Ordinance 99.22 DISTANCE FROM CURB, SIDEWALK, AND POWER LINES which states, in part, "Only small trees can be planted within 15 feet of power lines."

This policy is a "best-practices" guideline to work under, however situations will arise that may be unique and not specifically covered under this policy. When this occurs, it will be at the discretion of the City Electrical Engineer to coordinate a solution with the affected property owner and/or tree owner.

Easement and Right-Of-Ways

Over the last 10-15 years, the Electric Department has strived to place electric utilities in platted or existing utility easements or city right-of-ways. Historically, however, these easements were not always documented, or were not required to be included on a plat. Therefore the following assumptions are made when an easement has not been documented: any power line, whether overhead or underground, that has been in place for a significant period of time constitutes as a secondary or implied easement. Power lines located within these easements means that the Electric Department will claim 10 feet on either side from the center of the existing pole or pad mount equipment/vault for a total of a 20 foot wide easement for the purpose of vegetation management. The Electric Department then has the right to apply the following tree trimming guidelines to specified utility easements and right-of-ways as well as apparent easements.

Clearances

The Electric Department strives to maintain a two-year trim cycle. The exact amount of clearance needed in a given area depends on the type of trees in the area, the voltage of the line, and the type of line construction. Line sag during temperature extremes, as well as wind movement of power lines and trees also must be taken into consideration.

The area around the power poles and power lines is distributed into zones. Each zone is based on the horizontal distance from the center of the power pole on either side. This is the same for single-phase and three-phase contraction. There are four zones: 0, 1, 2 and 3. Only Zone 0 and part of Zone 1 is within the control of the easement by the Electric Department. Zones 2-3 are recommendations on what size trees should be planted.

Zone 0 – Within 5 feet

For trees whose trunks are located at or outside the zone: All limbs within this zone, measured from either side of the center of the pole (or the outside conductor between poles) will be removed. These limbs will be removed vertically ground to sky for any type of overhead primary conductor (i.e. open wire, Hendrix or tree wire, etc.)

For trees whose trunks are located within the zone: during the first trimming cycle after this policy is in effect (2022-2024), the tree shall be topped down to 3 feet, approximately 2 years growth, below telecommunication or the neutral conductor. For the subsequent cycle (2024-2026), if there has been substantial growth where the tree has grown back into the lines, the tree will be removed entirely and a replacement tree will be replanted (See below).

Zone 1 – 5 to 15 feet

Large shrubs or small evergreens and hardwood trees with mature heights ranging from 15 to 30 feet are allowed in this zone. Any tree with a maturity height above 30 feet should be topped at 30 feet. Certain main branches on older trees can remain inside the zone, but this depends on the health of the tree, direction of growth and likelihood of its limbs reaching the lines.

Zone 2 – 15 to 30 feet

Intermediate-height trees with mature heights ranging from 35 to 75 feet can be planted in this zone. Plant these trees at least 30 feet away from the nearest power line. These varieties could be considered small shade trees or large ornamentals.

Zone 3 – 30 to 45 feet

Large shade trees with mature heights of 75 feet or more. Plant these trees at least 45 feet away from the nearest power line.

Secondary Services

The Electric Department owns and is responsible for repairing or replacing the secondary service wires to residences or commercial buildings from the power pole to the point of attachment on the building. Therefore, it strives to maintain a 1 foot radius clearance around the secondary service that allows the wires to “hang free”.

It is the responsibility of the customer to maintain and trim any trees or limbs that overhang or surround the secondary service beyond 1 foot. Large branches that are within this 1 foot radius that have a large canopy remain the customer’s responsibility to trim or remove.

If a customer wishes to remove a tree or perform significant trimming that would be unsafe with the secondary service connected, the Electric Department’s line crew will disconnect and lower the service wire and re-connect it so that the tree can be trimmed as needed. There is no charge for this service, but it must be scheduled. Contact City Hall at (502) 348-5947 to make arrangements in advance.

Dead or Diseased Trees

Ordinance Chapter 99.27 DEAD OR DISEASED TREE REMOVAL ON PRIVATE PROPERTY states “The city shall have the right to cause the removal of any dead or diseased trees on private property within the city when such trees constitute a hazard to life and public property. The City will notify in writing the owners of such trees. Removal shall be done by said owners at their own expense within sixty (60) days after the date of service of notice. In the event of failure of owners to comply with such provisions, the city shall have the authority to remove such trees and charge the cost of removal on the owner’s property tax notice.” (Ord. 570, passed 1-10-95)

While it is the responsibility of the owner of the dead tree to remove it, the Electric Department acknowledges that certain parts or limbs of the tree may be relatively close to energized conductors, where only trained crews can safely trim and remove. Therefore each dead tree that is within Zone 0-1 will be handled on a case-by-case basis as determined by the City Electrical Engineer. In some cases the Electric Department’s crew or contracted tree trimming crew will remove part of the dead tree until a point that it is safe for a tree trimming crew not trained in trimming near energized lines can remove the remainder.

Brush Removal

During routine cycle tree trimming, the contractor hired by the Electric Department to perform the trimming work is responsible for removing any and all debris. This may include mulching on site and hauling the debris away.

If the tree trimming work is performed by the Electric Department’s crew or an electrical contractor for trouble-tickets, or by any crew during the response to an “act of nature” such as varmint, lightning, wind storms, ice storms, etc., the first priority is to restore electric service to customers as quickly and safely as possible, and to keep electrical facilities safe. To achieve these goals, the Electric Department’s crews have specific duties which differ from customer’s obligations. The Electric Department’s own line crew or contracted crew’s responsibility is cutting, trimming or removing trees or branches from equipment in an effort to restore service and to ensure future reliability.

After power has been restored and it is safe, it is the property owner’s responsibility to clean up trees or debris left on their property following this emergency, unscheduled tree trimming.

Replanting

It is the goal of this policy to improve the quality of electric service to all customers by trimming and removing trees and limbs. It is also the goal of the Electric Department to not damage or harm the tree coverage and overall viewscape for the City of Bardstown residents with the removal of any trees, however sometimes these two goals do not converge.

It is understandable that customers and community members do not wish to see less trees within the city. Therefore, for any tree that is completely removed by this policy, the Electric Department will give a customer allowance of up to \$500 at a local nursery for the cost of the tree plus the labor for planting the tree. Customers must contact and coordinate with the City Electrical Engineer to receive approval on the allowance.

INTRODUCED, SECONDED AND ADOPTED at a duly convened meeting of the City Council of the City of Bardstown, Kentucky, held on July 26, 2022 and on the same occasion declared it to be in full force and effect according to law.

CITY OF BARDSTOWN

J. Richard Heaton, Mayor

ATTEST:

Gary Little, City Clerk

Date: _____