

# What's Right in the Right of Way

**A**s we enjoy the long days of summer and review that long list of yard and landscaping projects, Copper Valley Electric Association reminds you to be aware of rights of way – particularly when constructing fences and landscaping in these areas.

## What is a right of way?

A right of way is use of private property covered by an agreement that allows utilities to construct and maintain their facilities in order to ensure reliability.

CVEA's power lines are constructed within rights of ways. CVEA does not own the land used for a power line right of way. Rights of way granted to CVEA by our member-owners are private property. Use of the power line right of way is restricted to use by the power company for electrical throughfare only.

CVEA needs access along rights of way to:

- Re-clear brush and trees that could contact power lines
- Add or replace transformers when new customers connect
- Make emergency repairs
- Maintain existing lines and structures

Right of way clearing is an important part of CVEA's goal of delivering safe, reliable, cost-effective electric service. Trees and branches that grow into power lines can cause outages and system disturbances, especially when we have wet weather or severe wind conditions.



*CVEA contractors clear over grown right of way on the transmission line*



*Cleared CVEA right of way*

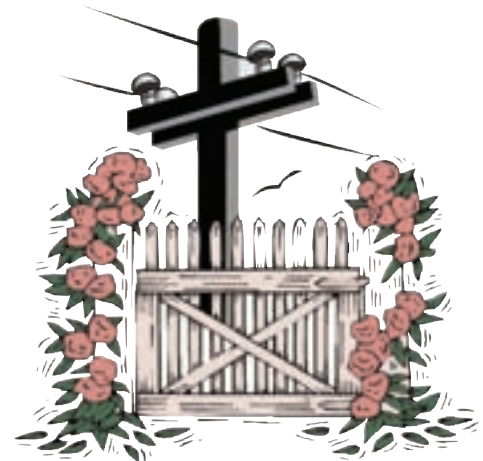
Tree and brush clearing can help reduce the number and length of outages. In order to ensure a high-standard of quality service to our members, CVEA monitors and manages vegetation growth that may create a potential problem.

## Fencing across overhead power line rights of way

Fences are important and often necessary for a property owner's privacy. However, it's necessary for CVEA to have access to the power lines to provide safe and uninterrupted service.

Typically, power lines extend along back lot lines and the right of way is the only access for the power line. If a fence is constructed around the entire perimeter of a lot so that it crosses or runs adjacent to a power line, please use the following guidelines:

- Do not pile or stack building materials in the right of way
- Do not attach any fencing or posts to the power poles.
- Retain a minimum distance of ten feet from all poles or underground transformer boxes. When underground electrical equipment is present, call CVEA for an underground locate before digging.



- When building a fence adjacent to a power line which extends along the property line, either:
  - a. Set the fence 10 feet from the centerline of the power line to allow for truck access.
  - b. Set the fence along the property line but provide 12-foot wide gates at either end of the right of way so access is maintained.

## Plant the right tree in the right place

Large trees near power lines can disrupt service and can pose safety hazards. Planting large trees away from rights of way helps ensure more reliable electric service and greater public safety. Proper selection of trees for use near power lines will reduce hazards and the need for expensive, unsightly pruning or removal.

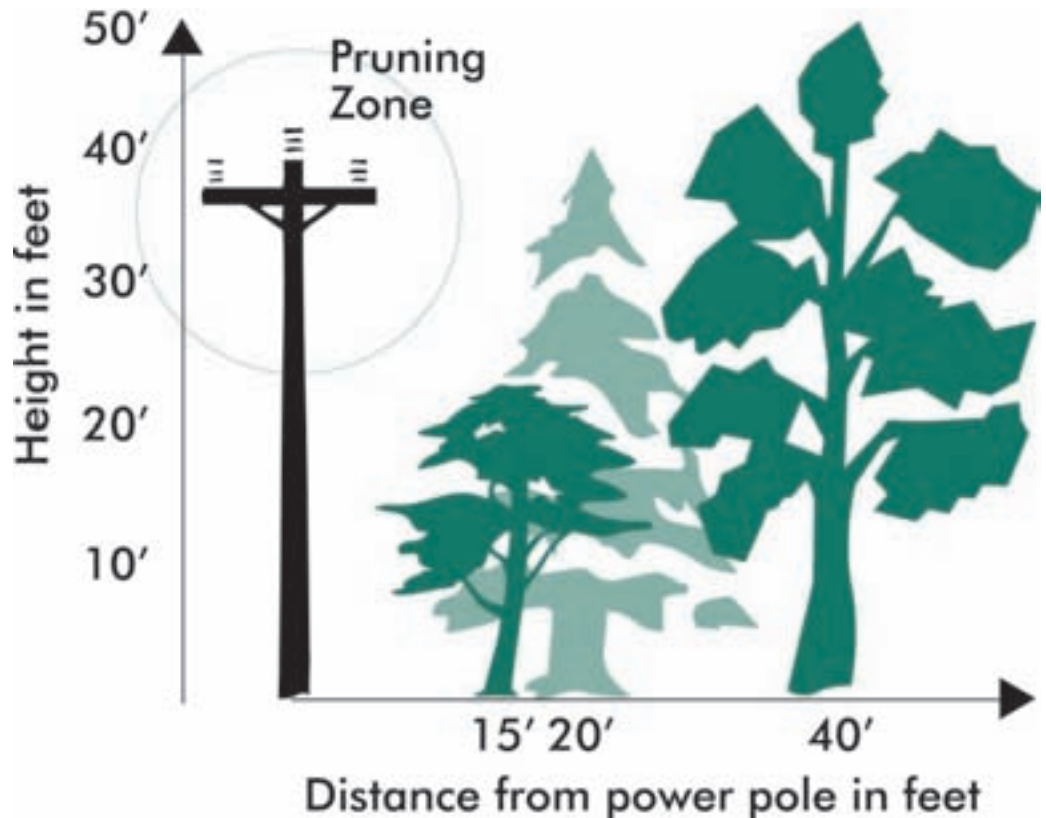
The diagram on the right shows the recommended distance a tree should be planted from power lines and poles.

Not all species thrive in all conditions. Consult a local nursery, the Alaska Cooperative Extension Service, or a landscape professional for information on suitable growing sites for specific species.

Don't plant trees where they will obstruct the electric meter. If you live in an area with underground power, do not plant shrubs and trees near metal transformer cabinets. Always call for a locate before you dig.

Near **underground** power lines:

- Call CVEA to locate cables before digging: this includes landscape contractors.
- Digging by hand is required within five feet of located primary underground lines.
- Plant trees a minimum of eight feet from transformer pads and underground cables so roots can't grow into the equipment. Appropriate distance is specific to each species.
- Create and maintain an eight-foot clearance between CVEA's underground facilities and large growing trees and five feet for shrubs. This assures crews access to poles and transformers for maintenance and repair.



Near **overhead** power lines:

- Consider the height of the tree at maturity in relation to conductor height.
- Consider the spread of mature trees in relation to the location of utility lines and poles.
- Plant trees at least 20 feet from the center line of power lines, from the power pole or where they will not interfere with guy wires or other equipment.
- Plant small trees and shrubs to allow access to the right of way by utility personnel and vehicles for constructing, operating, or maintaining utility equipment.

Placing the right tree in the right place can lower line clearance costs for CVEA while adding value to your home, providing summer shade to lower cooling costs and keeping out cold winter winds. Visit [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org) for more information.

CVEA, as well as other utilities, may exercise their rights to access, construct and maintain utility equipment within easements for overhead and underground facilities at any time.

For more information, visit [www.cvea.org](http://www.cvea.org) or call our offices at (907) 822-3211 in the Copper Basin or (907) 835-4301 in Valdez.



[www.cvea.org](http://www.cvea.org)