

# Trimming Trees Near Electric Lines

## Understanding the Role and Responsibilities of Citizens Electric Policies and Procedures

Our Forestry Department schedules tree trimming providing industry best practice in your area every three to four years. When work is scheduled on your lines, you will be notified by letter, door hanger, or crew visit. Tree to electric line clearances may vary due to line voltage, tree species, location and tree growth habits.

Trees that touch power lines are a hazard to anyone who may climb the tree, and limbs that have grown into lines can cause power outages. Citizens Electric Corporation regularly surveys our system in order to identify trees that are potential threats to safety and reliability.

Any part of a tree within an easement is considered dangerous to the electrical circuit and must be trimmed or removed. CEC uses pruning methods (natural, lateral and directional) that meet the American National A300 pruning standards. These methods leave trees safer and healthier than topping techniques. When trees cannot be pruned properly, they will be removed.

## Storm Damaged Trees

A storm can damage either a few trees or thousands across a wide area. Storm damage itself can range from a split limb to uprooted trees. CEC is responsible for clearing storm damaged trees from our electric lines and facilities in order to:

- Restore service
- Allow reasonable access for emergency restoration
- Ensure future service reliability

The tree owner, public or private, is responsible for the cleanup of storm debris removed from, on or over CEC facilities. The local municipality often assists in debris cleanup after a major storm.

**You can help protect your home and community by planting tall-growing trees away from electric lines and right-of-ways. Tall-growing trees planted beneath or adjacent to electric lines present a future hazard and eventually will require trimming or removal.**

## Tree Removal Requests

If you have a routine tree trimming request about the service line to your house, please inform our crew at that time. Your request will be reviewed when crews are in your neighborhood for routine circuit trimming. This helps us provide efficient customer service throughout our service area. Anytime you plan to trim or remove trees near our primary lines, please contact the CEC Forestry Department at least five days in advance so a representative can assess the potential for hazard and outage risk.

CEC does not perform complete tree removal for service drops to your house. The Line Department will drop services to allow customers or their contractors to remove a tree. A minimum of two working days notice is required and must be scheduled during normal working conditions.

Anytime you or your contractor will be working within 10 feet of an overhead line, members are responsible for notifying CEC beforehand. In certain cases involving primary wires, a CEC crew member may provide sufficient clearance to enable your contractor to safely complete the job.

Crews are dispatched to remove larger broken limbs pressing on your service lines and to assess trim requests for trees that have grown into the primary line.

## Contact Citizens Electric Forestry Department at (877) 876-3511

If you have called CEC with a tree trimming request in the past, then you know we ask a lot of questions! Our Forestry Department must determine whether your call may involve an emergency that could affect your electric service, might cause a safety hazard, or if it can be safely handled during our routine trimming. Your observations help us determine how your request is handled, which makes our questions and your answers very important! This publication serves as a guide to help you understand our tree trimming practices and to use when calling with related questions or concerns.

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## Tree Trimming Terms

**Electric Transformer:** A grey or black colored, barrel shaped object mounted on the pole below the primary electric wires. A transformer reduces the voltage levels down to the household voltage levels.

**Primary Electric Wire:** The electric wires that run from pole to pole, usually along the street. These wires may run through backyards or off the road and across country. Where more than one utility line (telephone or cable TV) is mounted on the same pole, the primary electric wires are at the top of the pole.

**Secondary Wire:** The electric wires that run from pole to pole and are located 6-8 feet below the primary wires. They are found below the transformer level and carry voltage from the transformer to the individual service lines to your home.

**Insulator:** The porcelain support used to insulate the wires from the pole. All electric lines require an insulator to attach the wires to the pole or to your residence at the weatherhead.

**Service Drop, Electric Service Line or Service Lateral:** The electric wires at your residence that run from the pole to the meter. The most common service drop is known as triplex wire. It consists of a bare center wire with two black coated wires wrapped around it. On older homes, the service drop may be three small wires running parallel to each other from the transformer pole or secondary tap to an attachment point on your residence.

**Service Entrance Assembly:** Consists of the weatherhead, conduit, meter base and conductor. The service entrance is owned by the customer

**Weatherhead:** Found on many homes, a weatherhead is a protective metal or plastic service bracket attachment located at the point where the line is connected to your residence. Any line that attaches to your weatherhead and/or insulator and meter is an electrical line.

## Tree Trimming Machinery

*The Citizens Electric crew might use either a bucket truck (pictured above) or a jarraff (pictured below) to trim trees.*



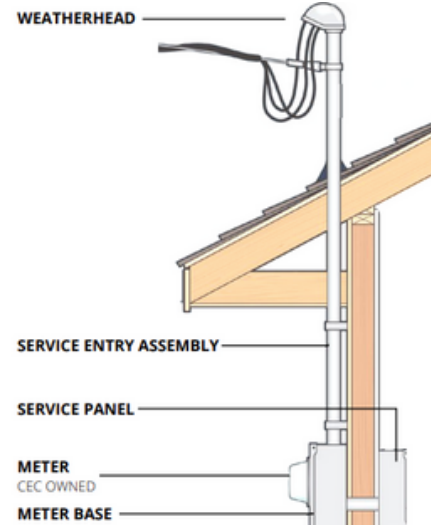
## Identifying Your Electric Service

When differentiating electric lines and telephone/cable lines:

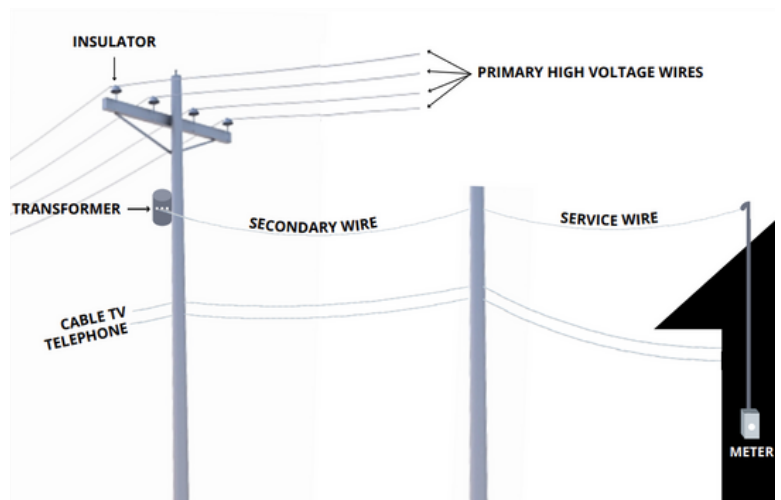
- Primary electric lines are always at or near the top of the pole
- All electric lines are attached at the pole through an insulator
- Only electric lines run through a transformer
- The line that attached to your weatherhead and meter is an electric line

If in doubt about any line, trace the line from the pole back toward your residence. Look for an insulator, transformer or a connection to your weatherhead and meter. If any of these are present, the line is electric. Stay away from the line!

## Service Entrance Assembly Diagram



## Electrical Service Diagram



**Citizens**  
Electric Corporation  
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative