PennLine

How We Trim Trees

When we come to your neighborhood, we inspect properties for trees that may need to be trimmed or removed. Here's how we evaluate trees for trimming:

- Is there adequate distance between the tree and energized power lines, transformers and other equipment?
- Will weather conditions cause tree-to-line contact? Will strong winds blow branches against the lines? Will movement in the lines, like sagging due to extreme heat or the weight of ice, push the lines into the tree?
- How much can the tree be expected to grow between now and the next trim cycle? Slow-growing trees need less trimming; faster-growing trees need more.

Directional tree pruning

We use a technique known as directional pruning—the generally accepted industry standard for line clearance tree trimming.

Directional pruning targets branches growing toward the power lines and leaves the rest of the tree undisturbed. The most common types of directional pruning are **side trimming** (Figure 1) and **crown reduction** (Figure 2).

Although the results of directional pruning can be dramatic, it is healthier for the tree than "topping" or "rounding over." "Rounding" produces a more symmetrical appearance, but it weakens the tree internally and may shorten its lifespan.

Some of the advantages of directionally-pruned trees are:

- They are more resistant to weather conditions, and less likely to develop insect and disease problems.
- They produce fewer "suckers" which can deprive the tree of crown growth.
- They require less pruning in the future.

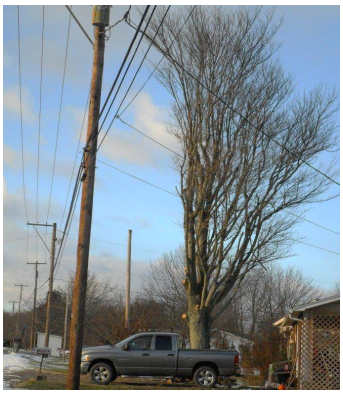

Figure 1. Shows side trimming of a tree growing beside the power line.

Tree removal

Trees may be removed if they are unstable and pose a danger of falling into the utility line. This kind of tree is known as a "danger tree." Some of the most common signs of a danger tree are a leaning trunk; dead branches or other evidence of disease; root rot; and shallow root structure.

We evaluate trees for removal on a case-by-case basis.

Figure 2. Shows crown reduction of a tree growing directly beneath the power line.