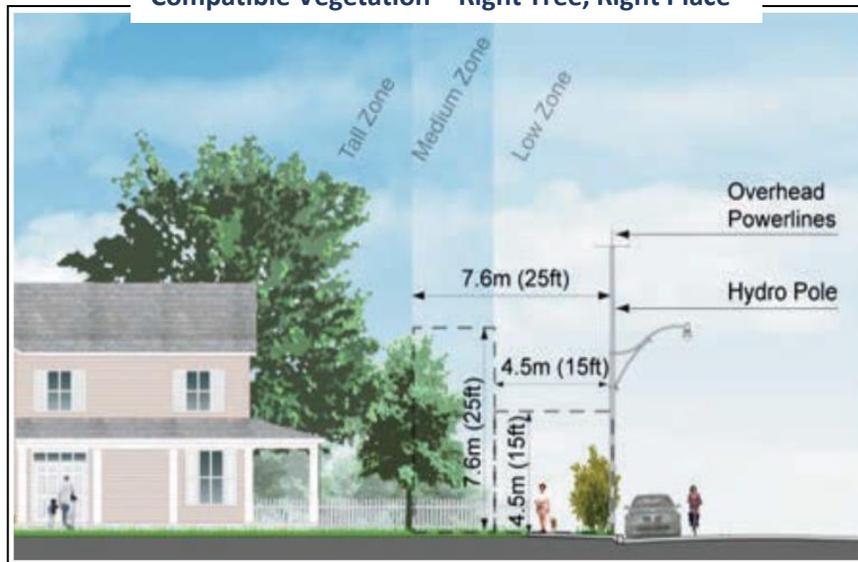


## Vegetation Management FAQs

### Why are utility providers across Ontario required from time to time to cut and trim trees on private property?

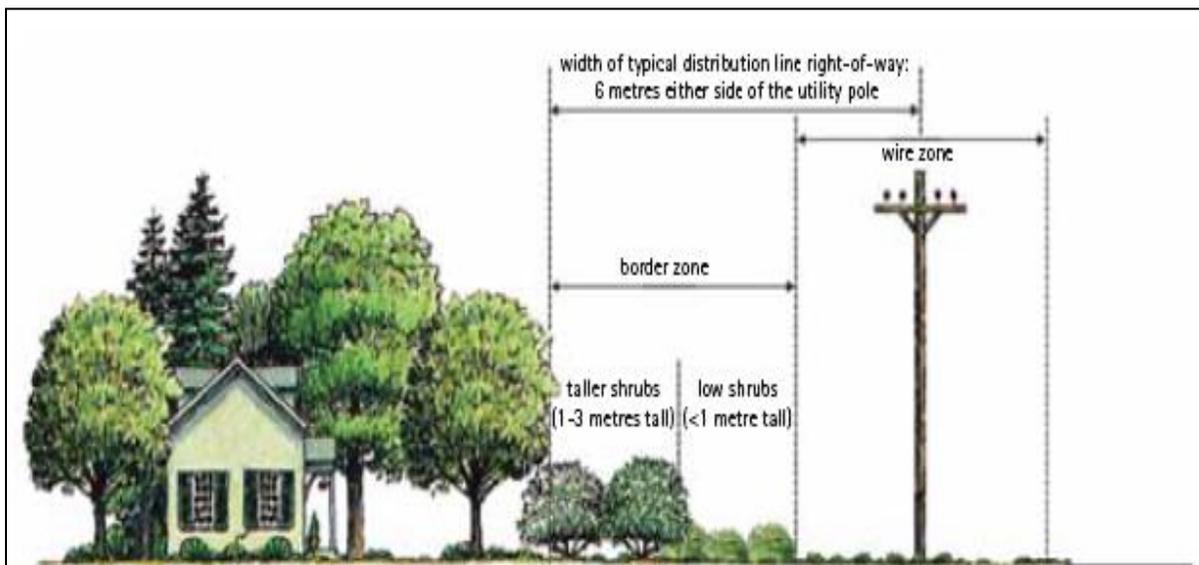
Fallen trees are a frequent source of power outages that can cause serious issues for communities and individuals. One disrupted power line can impact an entire community. Utility providers across Ontario, including Algoma Power Inc. (API) have a legal obligation to ensure they are taking proper measures to protect power lines. API developed a comprehensive vegetation management plan that not only addresses the legal obligations to protect the public through a sustainable power system but also recognizes the value and importance of a thriving environment. API makes every effort to preserve and protect trees and will work with property owners to encourage the placement of compatible species near power lines.

#### Compatible Vegetation – Right Tree, Right Place



©Planting Under or Around Powerlines & Electrical

Visit Electrical Safety Authority (ESA): [www.esasafe.com/assets/image/Tree-Planting.pdf](http://www.esasafe.com/assets/image/Tree-Planting.pdf)



©Guide to Planting along Corridors

Visit Algoma Power (API): [www.algomapower.com/Userfiles/File/Right%20Tree%20Right%20Place.pdf](http://www.algomapower.com/Userfiles/File/Right%20Tree%20Right%20Place.pdf)

## Vegetation Management

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### **What type of communication efforts does API have in place to advise property owners of planned vegetation management activities on their property?**

API understands the importance of communicating with property owners and makes every effort to assure that they understand all aspects of the scheduled or planned vegetation management work for their area. The comprehensive notification process may include:

- Community meetings, annual meetings with township councils, road superintendent meetings, and other community events as requested.
- Sending a detailed notice letter in advance of work commencing. The notice includes a return comment card which the land owner can use to send back questions or concerns.
- When requested on a reply card, an API employee will follow up by phone call to speak directly with the landowner.
- If there are still concerns, an employee will make a personal visit to the land owner to further discuss the planned work and answer any questions.
- Following the meeting then API will advise of next steps. In exceptional circumstances, a modification to the planned work may take place to accommodate the concerns of the property owner but protection and safety of the worker and public will always be the paramount consideration.
- API attempts to balance the importance of individual concerns with the requirement to treat all customers and landowners equally.

### **My neighbor doesn't want API to cut trees near the powerline on their property. As a resident and customer, I am concerned about losing power as it will impact my family, work place and important services. Can my neighbor stop a utility company from taking steps to protect powers lines that affect our community?**

You are entitled to expect that your utility provider is doing everything reasonable to ensure safe and reliable power for you and your family. We understand that some property owners may have a reason for certain trees on their property and we sympathize with them when such trees need to be removed or trimmed. The Electricity Act 2008 makes it clear that protecting power lines is a priority and a matter of public safety. As such, a customer may not decline access to their property for the purpose of maintaining vegetation that is within the vicinity to the power line. It is the legal obligation required of utility operators and as such, this work cannot be delegated to a property owner. We hope all our customers can feel confident we are taking the necessary steps to ensure a safe and reliable source of power.



## Vegetation Management

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### **Under what authority and circumstances can a utility distributor access private property?**

The right for electricity distributors such as API to enter onto private property and remove trees, branches and vegetation generally that may endanger the system is statutory.

The *Electricity Act, 1998*, S.O. 1998, c. 15, Sched. A provides as follows:

#### *Powers of entry*

**40 (1)** A transmitter or distributor may, at reasonable times, enter land on which its transmission or distribution system is located,

(a) to inspect, maintain, repair, alter, remove, replace or disconnect wires or other facilities used to transmit or distribute electricity; or

(b) to install, inspect, read, calibrate, maintain, repair, alter, remove or replace a meter. 1998, c. 15, Sched. A, s. 40 (1).

#### *Same: removal of obstructions*

(4) A transmitter or distributor may enter any land for the purpose of cutting down or removing trees, branches or other obstructions if, in the opinion of the transmitter or distributor, it is necessary to do so to maintain the safe and reliable operation of its transmission or distribution system. 1998, c. 15, Sched. A, s. 40 (4).

### **How does API decide what trees will need to be cut or trimmed near property lines? I don't think my tree is in the way and why can't I just trim it myself?**

API has employed experts in the field to conduct research to help create the company's comprehensive vegetation management plan that not only looks at protecting power but also promoting sustainable vegetation.

Working near power systems requires specific training which is why API employs certified Utility Arborists who are highly trained in this potentially dangerous work. Certified Utility Arborists have completed

the Utility Arborist Apprenticeship Program under the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, 444B Certificate of Qualification and are authorized to prune, clear vegetation, fell or remove within the ONT. OH&S Act defined 'Limits of Approach'. It is API's responsibility to ensure trimming and removal of trees is done properly and safely which includes abiding by health and safety regulations and standards.

While a tree may not seem like a threat to a property owner, API has invested in lengthy research to determine what is not only a current risk but may also pose a risk within the current 6 to 8 year cycle of its program.



Visit Electrical Safety Authority (ESA): <https://www.esa.on.ca/assets/image/Tree-Trimming.pdf>

## Vegetation Management Plan Overview

Vegetation can interfere with the safe and reliable operation of API's electrical system. Trees and brush growing in the vicinity of electrical wires increase the risk of injury to the public and API's employees and vegetation contacting or arcing with power lines can start forest fires (see Figure 1). Vegetation can cause electrical service interruptions when branches contact or come in close proximity to power lines. Some examples of contact are as vegetation grows naturally towards the conductor, as well as, during wind storms or with ice or snow build-up which causes movement or failure (breakage) of the vegetation and power lines to sag and/or swing (see Figure 2). Trees or branches falling on power lines are also a major cause of power interruption whether through natural tree health decline and/or loading forces on trees, such as wind, snow, and ice (see Figure 3). Vegetation can also impede the efforts of staff to locate, inspect, maintain, and repair disruptions to electrical service. The Vegetation Management ("VM") Plan's overall objective is to manage vegetation in proximity to electrical equipment on a regular schedule to:



- **Enhance public and worker safety near electrical equipment;**
- **Avoid vegetation caused outages thereby sustaining and improving reliability;**
- **Allow worker accessibility to the system; and**
- **Manage and plan vegetation work activities in a sustainable manner.**

