

The Oregon Administrative Rules contain OARs filed through July 15, 2008

PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

DIVISION 24 SAFETY STANDARDS

860-024-0016

Minimum Vegetation Clearance Requirements

(1) For purposes of this rule:

(a) "Readily climbable" means vegetation having both of the following characteristics:

(A) Low limbs, accessible from the ground and sufficiently close together so that the vegetation can be climbed by a child or average person without using a ladder or other special equipment; and

(B) A main stem or major branch that would support a child or average person either within arms' reach of an uninsulated energized electric line or within such proximity to the electric line that the climber could be injured by direct or indirect contact with the line.

(b) "Vegetation" means trees, shrubs, and any other woody plants.

(c) "Volts" means nominal voltage levels, measured phase-to-phase.

(2) The requirements in this rule provide the minimum standards for conductor clearances from vegetation to provide safety for the public and utility workers, reasonable service continuity, and fire prevention. Each operator of electric supply facilities must have a vegetation management program and keep appropriate records to ensure that timely trimming is accomplished to keep the designated minimum clearances. These records must be made available to the Commission upon request.

(3) Each operator of electric supply facilities must trim or remove vegetation to maintain clearances from electric supply conductors.

(4) Each operator of electric supply facilities must trim or remove readily climbable vegetation as specified in section (5) of this rule to minimize the likelihood of direct or indirect access to a high voltage conductor by a member of the public or any unauthorized person.

(5) Under reasonably anticipated operational conditions, an operator of electric supply facilities must maintain the following minimum clearances of vegetation from conductors:

(a) Ten feet for conductors energized above 200,000 volts.

(b) Seven and one-half feet for conductors energized at 50,001 through 200,000 volts.

(c) Five feet for conductors energized at 600 through 50,000 volts.

(A) Clearances may be reduced to three feet if the vegetation is not readily climbable.

(B) Intrusion of limited small branches and new tree growth into this minimum clearance area is acceptable provided the vegetation does not come closer than six inches to the conductor.

(6) For conductors energized below 600 volts, an operator of electric supply facilities must trim vegetation to prevent it from causing strain or abrasion on electric conductors. Where trimming or removal of vegetation is not practical, the operator of electric supply facilities must install suitable material or devices to avoid insulation damage by abrasion.

(7) In determining the extent of trimming required to maintain the clearances required in section (5) of this rule, the operator of electric supply facilities must consider at minimum the following factors for each conductor:

(a) Voltage;

(b) Location;

(c) Configuration;

(d) Sag of conductors at elevated temperatures and under wind and ice loading; and

(e) Growth habit, strength, and health of vegetation growing adjacent to the conductor, with the combined displacement of the vegetation, supporting structures, and conductors under adverse weather or routine wind conditions.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 183, 756, 757 & 758

Stats. Implemented: ORS 757.035 & 758.280 - 758.286

Hist.: PUC 9-2006, f. & cert. ef. 9-28-06; PUC 5-2007, f. & cert .ef. 5-14-07

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Vegetation Pruning Standards

An operator that is an electric utility as defined in ORS 758.505 shall perform tree and vegetation work associated with line clearance in compliance with the American National Standard for Tree Care Operations, ANSI A300 (Part 1)-2001 Pruning, approved May 22, 2001, by the American National Standards Institute.

[Publications: Publications referenced are available from the Commission.]

Stat. Auth.: ORS 756, ORS 757 & ORS 758

Stat. Implemented: HB 2493 & ORS 757.035

Hist.: PUC 16-2002, f. & cert. ef. 6-14-02