



Trees and Power Lines – Your Guide to Making Safe Choices

We love trees too!

At ATCO Electric, we strive to deliver safe, reliable power to our customers. A big part of fulfilling that promise is through the regular maintenance of power line rights-of-way.

We recognize that trees and shrubs are an important part of good landscaping. They look great and provide much-needed windbreaks, shelterbelts and shade. However, did you know that trees growing near power lines cause a potential hazard to your family and community? When a tree contacts a power line it can cause a power outage, a fire, or potentially a fatal electric shock!

This doesn't mean you shouldn't plant trees near power lines. It just means you need to be careful to plant them at the proper distances.

ATCO Electric's goal is to work with our customers to reduce the risks and hazards of danger trees. This guide provides you with some preliminary information on ways to landscape safely near power lines. It explains ATCO Electric's commitment to the safe maintenance of power line rights-of-way and how you can help.

Plan before you plant

The best way to ensure the safety of your family and community is to plan your landscaping needs carefully. Always plant trees at least 8 metres from a primary power line. (Primary power lines generally run parallel to roads and utility rights of way). Consider the height and shape of the mature tree as well as the direction of prevailing winds. Trees should be planted on the leeward side to reduce the hazard of trees blowing into power lines. (See illustration 1)

Remember, if you plant your tree closer than 8 metres, it may have to be removed later, which is both costly and inconvenient.

If you would like to plant vegetation closer than 8 metres, choose low-growing plants and shrubs. Be sure to maintain a brush-free zone of at least 1.5 metres. (See illustration 2)
Types of shrubs you may want to consider include:

Acceptable Shrubs (Plant a minimum of 1.5 metres from the power line)

Rose	Black Cherry	Sandcherry	Caragana
Lilac	Redman elder	Hawthorne	Cotoneaster
Honeysuckle	Western	Currant	

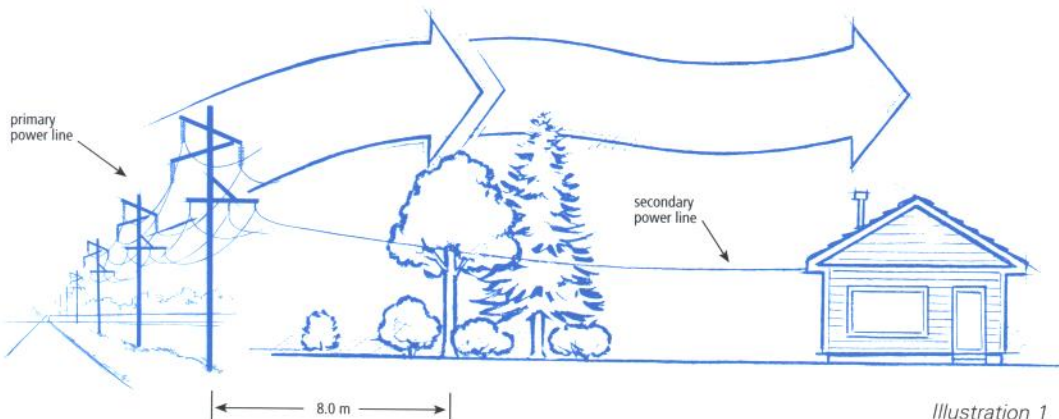


Illustration 1

For more information contact ATCO Electric's Customer Assistance Centre at 1-800-668-2248 or go online at www.atcoelectric.com

Tip:

If you want to make an attractive border around your property and at the same time disguise or take attention away from a power pole, a hedge is a good idea. Flowering hedges are a good hardy choice for Alberta's climate. Check with your local nursery for advice on choosing a hedge.

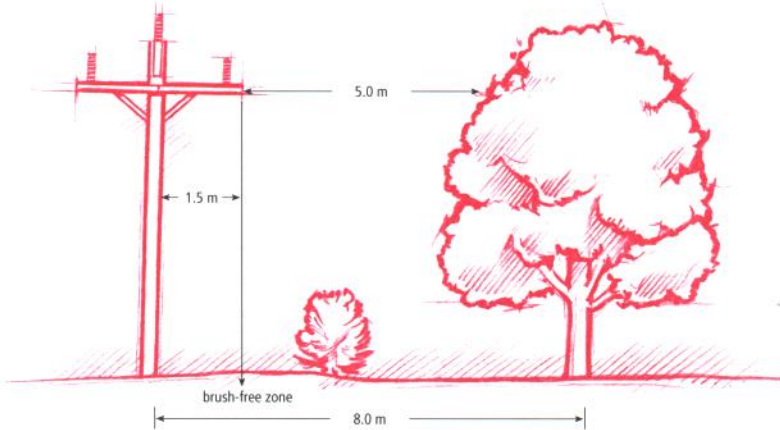


Illustration 2

When landscaping your yard, avoid planting trees that will grow into the secondary power line that serves your home. (See illustration 1). If the power lines are underground, contact Alberta One Call before you dig.

Good grooming goes a long way

Each year, ATCO Electric undertakes a well-planned, comprehensive maintenance program to ensure the safety of our customers and the reliability of the power we deliver. We work with customers and municipalities to ensure vegetation is maintained and rights-of-way are cleared. Our staff plan the maintenance work well in advance and will contact you prior to conducting maintenance on your property.

Even with directional trimming, where the tree growth is directed away from overhead lines, crews will still have to return every three to four years to remove water sprouts and redirect the growth pattern of the tree. By only removing the portions of the tree that infringe on the required clearances, the trimmed tree will tend to grow away from the power line.

However, it is sometimes necessary to remove a tree(s) that is interfering with reliability or poses a potential hazard. This step is not taken lightly and it is done to protect you, your family and your neighbours. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in these instances.

We value your help

As always, working near power lines can be dangerous. Expert contractors using safe equipment and practices conduct our rights-of-way maintenance work.

You can help us keep your community safe by:

- Cooperating with ATCO Electric staff when they contact you prior to performing rights-of-way maintenance;
- Contacting us whenever you notice a tree that poses a potential hazard;
- Contacting us if you have questions or concerns about vegetation near power lines;
- Contacting us before you do any work near a power line.

Contact us

If you have questions or concerns, please call us.

ATCO Electric Customer Assistance Centre
1-800-668-2248

24 Hour Emergency &
Power Repair
1-800-668-5506



Or, for more information
visit our web site at
www.atcoelectric.com