



Safety Requirements for the Tree Care Profession



**Life-Saving Information
for
Clients of
Tree Care Workers
and
Tree Care Workers
Performing Work Near
Electrical Facilities**

Introduction

Each year, people are seriously injured or killed by coming into contact with electrical facilities while performing tree work. A surprising number of tree workers, and those looking to hire tree professionals, do not realize that these **workers must be qualified to work within 10 feet of an energized electrical component.**

This rule is part of a series of standards put in place by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to protect those who work near energized facilities.

Selecting the Proper Professional

Unqualified tree workers must always maintain a Minimum Approach Distance (MAD) of at least 10 feet, or greater distance depending

upon voltage, from overhead power lines and all energized electrical components.

Figure 1. shows the configuration of a typical electrical distribution pole. Notice that there is plenty of energized equipment on a utility pole to avoid, in addition to the highest wires. **Unqualified tree workers must always stay clear by at least 10 feet from all energized components** including, but not limited to, transformers, switches, fuses, secondary conductors, and service drops.

At all times during tree work activities, the safety clearance zone of 10 feet around the energized facilities cannot be entered by:

1. **Unqualified tree workers**
2. **Any portion of the tree or other vegetation being worked**
3. **Any part of equipment being used to perform the work, i.e. aerial lifts, cranes, pole pruners, saws, etc.**

Remember to treat all lines as if they are energized at all times. A street light conductor, cable TV wire, guy wire, even a telephone line can be energized with enough voltage to kill. Indirect contact with an energized conductor can result in serious injury or death. Indirect contact occurs when a limb you are touching or piece of equipment you are holding comes in contact with an energized conductor or piece of equipment. Half of all electrocution deaths come from indirect contact with energized equipment.

Qualified line-clearance tree trimmers are tree workers who have received specialized training that qualifies them to work safely within 10 feet of energized power lines and equipment. Even with special training,

qualified line clearance tree trimmers cannot work within OSHA's absolute Minimum Approach Distance of 2 feet 4 inches, based on the lowest primary voltage.

Electrical Hazards Awareness Programs (EHAP) for Tree Workers

When electrical accidents occur, one question asked by OSHA will be: "Did you provide electrical safety training with hazard awareness?" Be certain you are able to answer "YES" and provide supporting documentation.

One way to ensure you can positively respond to OSHA's questions is to complete the EHAP. EHAP is a professional safety program offered by the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) to help tree workers become line-clearance qualified. This training can help satisfy the requirements of the OSHA 1910.269 Safety Standard which includes:

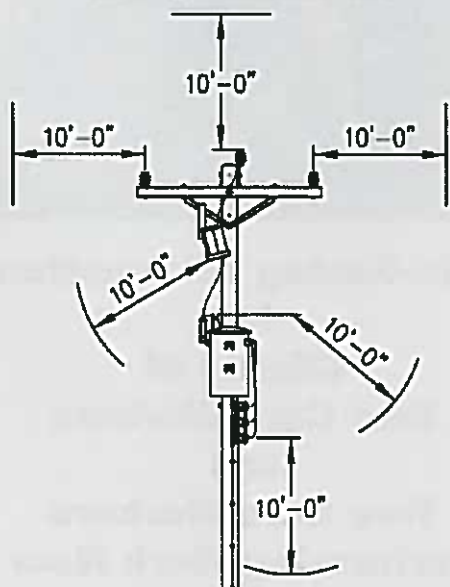
1. Employer-certified training
2. On-the-job training and verification

EHAP training will also help to fulfill the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Z133.1 Safety Standard, which requires that all employees be trained to recognize electrical hazards.

Another option is for employers to develop and administer their own OSHA and ANSI compliant EHAP training program with certification.

Remember, safety first! Make certain you are qualified for work you have been hired to perform. Contact us to discuss work before you initiate a job near energized lines and equipment.

Figure 1. Mandatory Safety Zone for Unqualified Workers



Call Before You Dig

Although most electric lines are overhead, more electrical service facilities are placed underground each year. Since these lines are not readily visible, the potential danger of accidentally digging into these facilities has increased.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

Before you plant a tree, grind a stump, or dig for any reason, remember to call first by dialing 811. When planting a tree remember to look up as well. Try to picture the tree at its mature size and ask yourself if it is the right tree for the chosen location. Select only compatible, low-growing trees when planting near electrical facilities. Remember when planting, "Right Tree, Right Place". Given this early consideration, your tree will be able to grow to its natural shape and size unhindered.

You can avoid injuries, damage to underground lines, and delays to your schedule by placing a call to **PA One-Call** at **1-800-242-1776**, or by dialing **811** before you dig or excavate. **Please, plan ahead and call at least 72 hours before you plan to start your work.**

**Calling First Could
Save Your Life!**

More Information

Duquesne Light is committed to providing safe and reliable electric service. If you are going to perform work around electrical facilities and have concerns about the safety of the situation, contact Duquesne Light's Customer Care Department **3 business days in advance of your work**, 412-393-7100. Your call will be directed to the proper department for a timely response to your questions.

For more information on safe work practices and current rules and regulations, please refer to the following sources...

Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)

Website:

<http://www.osha.gov/>

Toll-Free Telephone:

1-800-321-OSHA (6742)

American National Standards Institute (ANSI)

Website:

<http://www.ansi.org/>

Telephone:

1-202-293-8020

Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA)

Website:

<http://www.treecareindustry.org/>

Toll-Free Telephone:

1-800-733-2622

Telephone:

603-314-5380