



**In the near future,** you may notice work crews performing necessary maintenance, including using herbicides to control vegetation, on powerline rights-of-way in your area.

This brochure answers frequently asked questions about this procedure, including why this work is needed near your property.

#### **Questions or Concerns?**

If you have any questions about the herbicide application in your area, please contact your local utility company.

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE SAFE USE OF HERBICIDES IN GENERAL, PLEASE VISIT:**

U.S. Department of Agriculture: [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)  
Utility Arborists Association: [www.utilityarborist.org](http://www.utilityarborist.org)  
Nature Conservancy: [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org)  
U.S. Forestry Service: [www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us)  
National Wild Turkey Federation: [www.nwtf.org](http://www.nwtf.org)  
U.S. EPA: [www.epa.gov/pesticides](http://www.epa.gov/pesticides)

# **A Message for Our Neighbors**





### Why Utility Companies Manage Vegetation

Strict industry regulations mandate that powerlines and the rights-of-way surrounding them must be clear of possible hazards caused by overgrown vegetation. Trees must be kept back from powerlines to help prevent power outages, and the rights-of-way must be easily accessible for maintenance and repair crews in the event of an outage.

### Overgrown Vegetation in and Around Powerlines Can Lead to:

- Trees and branches touching or falling on powerlines, which is the most frequent reason for service interruptions.
- Limited access to powerlines for our crews who need to routinely perform inspections, maintenance and repairs.
- An unsafe bridge to electrical towers and lines for children and animals — increasing risks of electrocution or shock.

Years of field experience has shown that an integrated vegetation management approach which includes the use of herbicides along with mechanical methods to manage vegetation, is the most efficient way to keep powerlines and rights-of-way clear. Using mechanical methods alone isn't as practical with the hundreds of miles that must be managed and doesn't control vegetation with as much success or longevity as herbicides.

The spread of invasive plant species has presented another problem for these areas. Using herbicides helps control these plants from overtaking rights-of-way, and thwarts their spread to adjacent areas, including your property.

### What it Looks Like After Treatment

Our goal is to keep powerlines and rights-of-way safe and your power on. We focus on minimizing disturbance to low growing, compatible vegetation. Using herbicides not only removes incompatible plant species, but also promotes the growth of desirable grasses and wildflowers. Since 1953, researchers at Pennsylvania State University have studied the differences between herbicide use and mechanical methods on powerline rights-of-way. Results show that herbicide use can enhance wildlife habitat more than mechanical alone by promoting grasses, low-growing shrubs and other ground cover that native animals prefer.

### Environmental Affects

All herbicides sold in the United States must be registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) based on the submission of scientific studies showing that the herbicide will perform its intended function without unreasonable adverse effects to human health and the environment. In addition, we take extra precautions like extensive applicator training to ensure the environment and native wildlife aren't negatively affected. We also make certain that site visits are properly timed for best results and the most appropriate application methods are used when taking into account the site surroundings.

### Safety of Herbicide Applicators

We employ a rigorously trained team of professional applicators to help ensure safe handling and precise applications to only targeted incompatible vegetation. Safety — both to the surrounding vegetation and people in the area — is their highest priority.

### How Treatment Affects My Property

If you're receiving this brochure, it's because your property is located near a powerline right-of-way. As work begins, we are taking the time to inform property owners about the nature of our work, so you are comfortable as we service these areas in your neighborhood. Our crews use only the most proven and environmentally sound tactics to control vegetation, such as the effective and responsible use of herbicides. This is based on nearly 60 years of university and industry research on how to use herbicides to help create optimum plant and wildlife habitats. In addition, we practice precision herbicide application techniques by using buffer zones between treatment areas and your property. The result is powerlines and rights-of-way that are clear of incompatible vegetation with little-to-no effect on adjacent or nearby properties.

### Not All Vegetation Should Be Mowed

In many cases, mechanical methods like trimming, cutting and mowing can have less-than-desirable results for both vegetation control and the environment. With certain vegetation, mowing the plant only temporarily removes the above ground plant material, allowing the roots to continue to grow. When these plants recover, this can promote rapid re-sprouting which requires additional and often more intensive future maintenance. Mechanical methods also can have negative effects on wildlife, the safety of crew members and your property. Flying debris is dangerous to animals and our operators, and mechanical methods also can induce soil erosion and compaction, as well as cause ruts by heavy machinery moving across your property. The use of petroleum products and engines can carry their own hazards to crews inhaling exhaust and its introduction into the environment. Herbicides enable control of the entire plant and often only require one application every few years. This eliminates the need for much more frequent mechanical treatments, like tree trimming and mowing meaning you'll see our crews much less.