Our Tree Trimming Strategy

Tree trimming is an extremely important part of the work our team at NS Power does year round, to strengthen the system and make it more resilient to severe weather. That's because trees coming into contact with power lines is the number one reason for outages during storms. We prioritize where we do the work each year based on outage statistics and other data, but we also change our plans based on situations like storms that come up throughout the year. We target parts of the province that have been damaged by storms as well as trees that have been weakened by storms, but may not fall right away. These investments and proactive planning ensure we use our resources effectively to help us remove vegetation before it causes an outage.

ANNUAL TREE TRIMMING AND REMOVAL INVESTMENTS

- We invest a significant amount in trimming and removing trees each year.
- Our tree trimming investments have nearly doubled when compared to just three years ago – up from **$25 million** to **$45 million** a year.
- This work is critical as trees coming into contact with power lines is the number one reason for outages.

QUICK FACTS

- There are **about 33,000 km of power lines** across Nova Scotia – that's about the same distance as driving three round trips from Halifax to Victoria.
- Our crews clear trees and branches from **several hundred kilometres of power line** each year; widen rights of way; and remove full trees at risk of being uprooted during extreme wind.

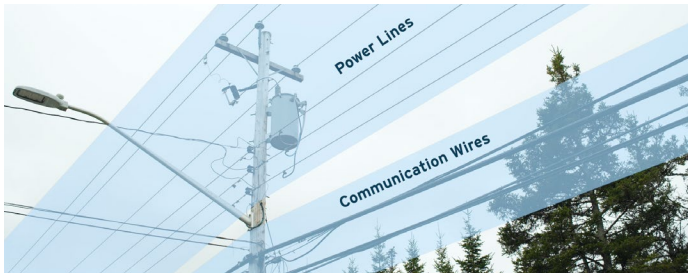
IMPACT OF TREES ON POWER LINES

Trees can come into contact with power lines during storms for a variety of reasons:

- High winds can cause trees or branches to fall into lines, pulling lines down.
- Trees or branches can also fall into our lines under the weight of the heavy wet snow and freezing rain.

It can also be the reason some outages last longer, due to the damage caused by trees falling into the lines, or the time it takes to get to the damage, remove the trees and make repairs.

This is why we give such a high priority to trimming or removing trees around power lines, so if a tree does fall during a storm it is far enough away from our lines that it won't cause an outage.



THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN POWER LINES & TELECOMMUNICATION LINES

The thick black coated lines on the bottom of poles are telecommunciation lines. These lines bring phone and internet service to your house and trees on these lines won't cause power outages. The ones above are power lines.

NS POWER'S RELIABILITY DEPARTMENT

We have created a reliability department to place even more focus on improving service for our customers. Our reliability and operations teams are responsible for executing the work to ensure our customers are receiving reliable service, as well as communicating with customers, municipalities, elected officials and stakeholders across the province about their concerns related to reliability issues. The team is also very engaged in the development of our strategic reliability plans and how we can best invest capital to improve service for customers.

To learn more, **visit** nspower.ca/trees

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Our Tree Trimming Strategy

TREE TRIMMING IN YOUR COMMUNITY

IDENTIFYING PRIORITY AREAS

- In heavily treed communities where tree removal isn't feasible, we trim branches instead of whole trees and we also use new technologies like adding line covers for added protection against fallen branches.
- In addition to our focus on vegetation management, we're also making upgrades to our equipment. This allows us to detect the cause of outages sooner and when there's an outage to a segment of the feeder, fewer customers are impacted.
- Moving power poles/lines from less accessible areas (woods) to the side of the road, improves access for our crews and help restore power faster during an outage.

PATROLLING LINES AFTER STORMS

- Another important piece of this is going back to some of the harder hit areas after storms to patrol the power lines. This is done on foot, by vehicle and/or by helicopter.
- We want to identify anything that could cause issues down the road and we go back to address those things as quickly as we can before the next storm.
- One of the main focuses of this work involves identifying trees that have been weakened by the storm and trimming or removing them so they won't fall into our lines in the future.
- Fiona was a great example of this. In the weeks that followed Fiona, we had dedicated crews who focused on trimming and removing damaged trees and branches. More than 10,000 trees were removed during that post storm clean up.

TREE TRIMMING PRACTICES – TWO PHASED APPROACH

- First we move through the area where the work is taking place with bucket trucks and remove branches and trees away from the power lines.
- We then follow up with a mower, which is typically an excavator with a mulching head on it, which mulches the remaining vegetation.
- There's always a bit of time between the trimming and the mulching as we need to leave enough time and space between these vehicles/equipment to do the work safely.
- In some cases, the mulching may also have to be done manually due to heavy equipment not being permitted or not being able to access the entire right-of-way. This could be in light of environmental factors such as being near public water supplies, designated habitat on crown land, or the condition of the area (sloped, deep snow, standing water).
- This can slow clean up of the remaining vegetation, however, we work as safely and as quickly as we can to get the work done and removed from rights-of-way.

WORKING WITH MUNICIPALITIES AND LANDOWNERS

- Working with municipalities and individual landowners is key as it allows us to address areas that need vegetation work.
- In some cases, trees are on private property which means we need permission to work there. We also need permission from landowners to remove or trim trees outside of our rights of ways.
- When it comes to expanding rights of way, we make sure no trees are within 20 feet on either side of the power lines
- In some cases, we work with property owners if trees or shrubs need to be replaced. As part of this work, we ensure information about which trees and shrubs are best to plant near power lines is shared with our customers.
- We strive to preserve as much of the beauty as the trees provide, while balancing the need to cut and remove trees to improve reliability in communities across our province.

KEEPING CUSTOMERS INFORMED

Making sure customers are informed is very important to us. Customers are interested in knowing what reliability work is happening in their area and we want to make it easier for them to get the information they need.

Our **Interactive Tree Trimming Map** gives a breakdown, by region, of the tree trimming investments and distance covered. Customers can click on their region to see the average annual investment. The site includes data from 2018-2023 and will be updated annually.

To learn more, **visit** nspower.ca/trees

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