



GALLATIN DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICITY
TREE TRIMMING POLICY

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GALLATIN DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICITY

TREE TRIMMING POLICY

PURPOSE

The Gallatin Department of Electricity (GDE) is dedicated to providing the citizens and businesses of Gallatin with safe, reliable, and affordable electric service. Tree trimming, as a preventative measure, is an important part of the overall maintenance program for our power distribution system. The purpose of this document is to provide and establish guidelines for GDE’s tree trimming program. It is also intended as a reference for our customers with respect to landscaping and tree planting. This policy is subject to change without notice.

RIGHT TO MAINTAIN

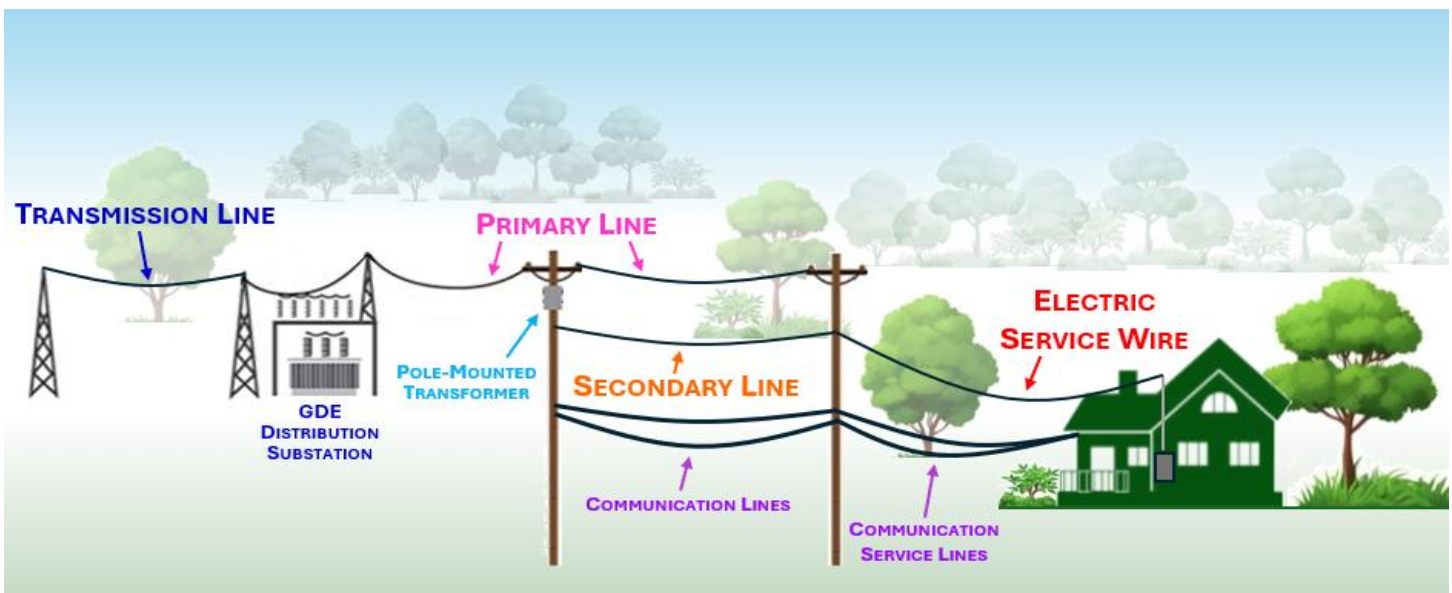
Courts in Tennessee support a public utility's right to trim and remove trees, both within and outside of the right-of-way. According to the Municipal Electric Plant Law of 1935, GDE has the power and authority to purchase, construct, maintain and improve the electric system and to "do all acts and things necessary and convenient" to carry out the powers given.



POWER DISTRIBUTION – DEFINITIONS

Within any electrical service network, there are different classifications for each section of the distribution system. A general knowledge of these different sections is necessary to understand the intent of GDE's tree trimming policy.

- **Transmission Lines** – These are the high-voltage (161kV) lines that deliver power from the TVA generation stations to the GDE distribution substations. They are located on metal towers and transport high-voltage electricity to serve entire cities and towns.
 - **Primary Lines** – These are higher-voltage (12,470/ 7,200V) lines that feed from GDE's substations into the city to deliver power into neighborhoods. They are usually located at the top of wood or metal poles and are above any pole-mounted transformers. GDE maintains these lines.
 - **Secondary Lines** – These lower-voltage (120/240V, 120/208V, or 277/480V) lines deliver energy to a cluster of homes or businesses in a neighborhood. They are on the same poles as primary lines but are located below any pole-mounted transformers. GDE maintains these lines.
 - **Service Wire** – This lower-voltage (120/240V, 120/208V, or 277/480V) line is used to deliver power directly to the customer. The service wire is connected to the service weather head on individual homes or businesses.
- Note: GDE does not maintain service wires. It is the responsibility of the customer/ property owner to perform preventative tree-trimming maintenance for service wires.**
- **Communication lines** – These are the lowest lines on a utility pole. They are usually black and may appear thicker than power lines. It's more common to see trees and vegetation near them. GDE does not own or maintain these wires.



COMMUNICATION

GDE, as a public power provider, is not required to notify or seek approval from individual property owners to perform planned preventative maintenance. However, we do endeavor to keep our customers informed of these activities. When maintenance is planned for an area, we will send out notifications via postcards or door hangers. In addition, personnel are available to discuss, by phone or in person, any system maintenance that is planned for your property.

TRIMMING GUIDELINES

GDE's main objective for our tree trimming program is safety for our customers and our employees. Other factors we consider as part of this program are service reliability and ensuring the health of the trees. GDE maintains all primary and secondary power lines. Currently this is done through a rotational trimming program; crews start on one section of the system and then move on to other sections of the system. When they have completed trimming for all sections of the system, they start over again with the first section. GDE's current target for tree trimming is to complete one trimming cycle within 3 years.

STANDARD REQUIREMENTS

The following are GDE's standard requirements for any trees/bushes on our power distribution system:

- For trees, GDE requires a minimum clearance of 15' from any power line
- There shall be no limbs hanging over any power lines, regardless of the distance between the limbs and the power line
- For small shrubs, GDE requires a minimum clearance of 10' from the base of the pole on all sides
- For pad-mounted transformers, primary vaults, and secondary vaults GDE requires:
 - A 10' clearance on the front (the side with the door, padlock, and bolt)
 - A minimum of 3' of clearance on each side and around the back

HOW GDE TRIMS TREES

GDE uses a lateral trimming method that was developed by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). Lateral trimming is the best practice for keeping the trees healthy and more resistant to high winds or heavy ice. It also redirects growth away from the power lines. GDE does not "top" or "round" trees, as these methods leave the trees weakened and susceptible to insects and/or disease.

For trees that are growing directly under the power lines, GDE will use the "V" trimming method, which allows the branches to grow naturally on either side of the power lines (although tree removal is typically the best option in this scenario).

During routine tree trimming, GDE's contractors will remove (and/or chip) tree limbs and other debris that may fall onto customer's property. During emergency tree trimming for storms or other "Acts of God", the customer is responsible for cleanup of any tree debris. GDE does not grind stumps.

The customer is responsible for any trimming desired/ required for their individual service lines or for any security light the customer might have. GDE will disconnect the house service so that trimming may be safely completed by the customer. GDE will reconnect the service once trimming is finished. The disconnection/ reconnection of service will be done by GDE free of charge provided they are completed during regular business hours.



SAFETY MAINTENANCE ZONE

For the safety of our employees, GDE requires certain vegetation-free maintenance zones. Specifically:

- There should be no trees or woody shrubs within a 15' radius around each pole
- For power lines located along the side or in the rear of a property (that are not accessible from a paved or gravel surface)
 - The area extending to 15' on either side of the line should be well maintained and should be kept free of any trees or woody shrubs
 - Vegetation outside this area may be trimmed or removed selectively
- In landscaped areas, GDE will work with property owners to maintain proper clearances, however GDE retains the right to remove non-compatible vegetation
- Vines growing on poles, guy wires, or other utility equipment will be addressed, however they may not always be removed
- A clearance of 3' must be maintained along the sides and rear of a pad mount transformer, while a 10' clearance is required on the front (the door side)

GDE retains the right to maintain, at its discretion and in any manner deemed appropriate, any easements or rights-of-way that are not adequately maintained by the property owner.

HAZARD TREES

GDE defines trees that are structurally unsound and/or at risk of falling and hitting a target as “hazard trees”. Factors considered when GDE is assessing a potential hazard tree are:

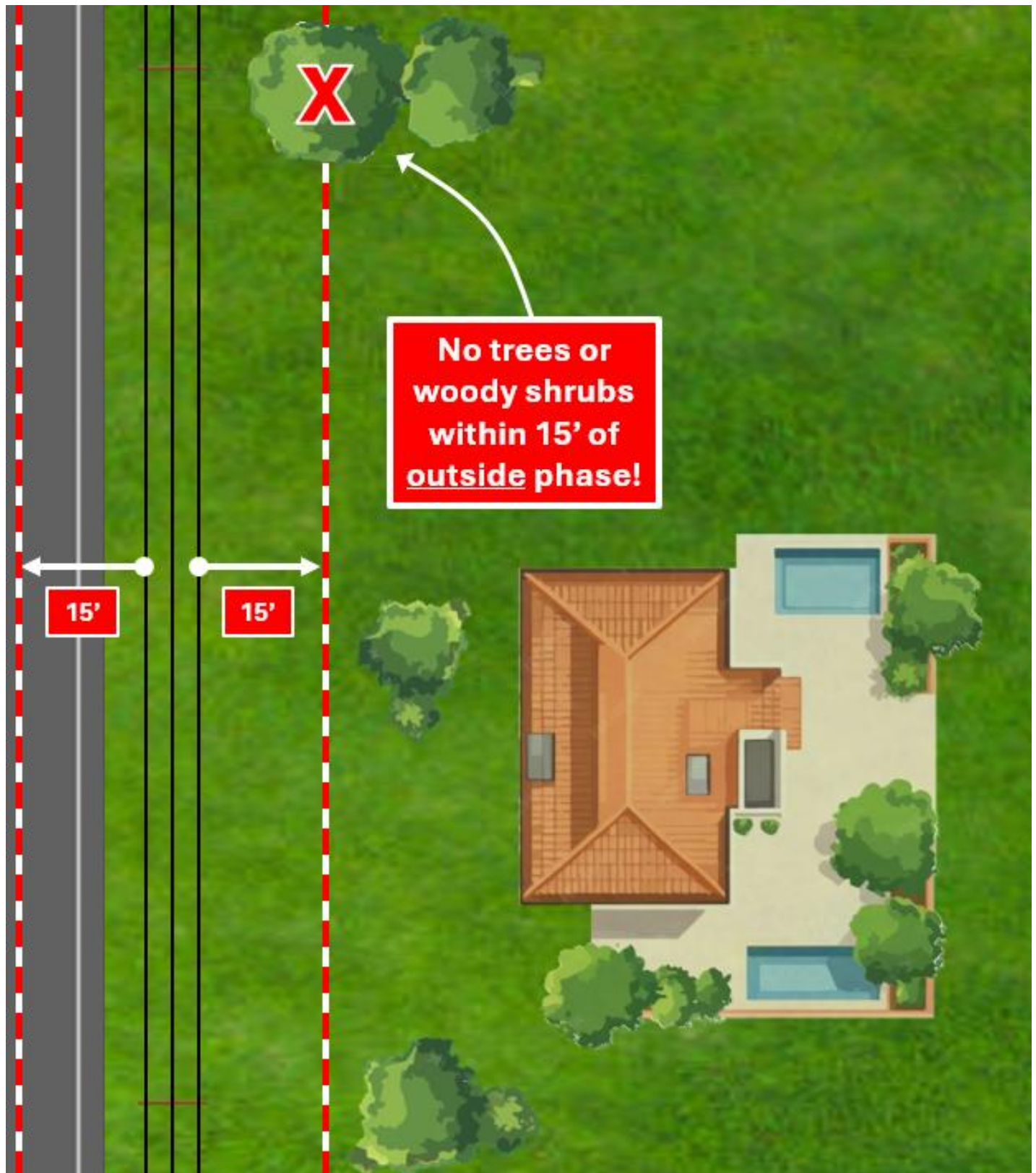
- Location of tree relative to primary power lines
- Surrounding terrain
- Access to GDE equipment
- Voltage classification (transmission, distribution, or service)

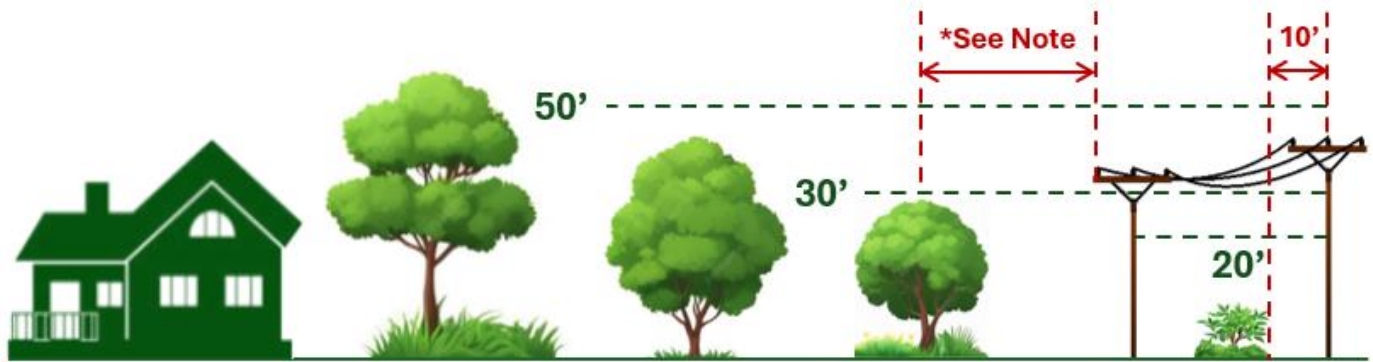
Additional notes on hazard trees:

- Trees that are deemed to be hazards by GDE that have trunks or limbs within 15' of primary power are candidates for removal if they cannot be trimmed in such a way as to eliminate any threat posed to GDE's equipment
- Trees that are deemed to be hazards by GDE that have trunks or limbs that are not within 15' of primary power are the responsibility of the property owner
 - GDE retains the right and may elect to remove, at its discretion, any limbs and/or portions of the trunk that could strike any GDE equipment
 - Removal of the remaining tree and disposal of all wood debris is the responsibility of the property owner
- GDE does not remove trees that are near service lines (these are the lines running to the weather head on a customer's house)
 - The property owner is responsible for removing trees that may affect the service lines
 - GDE will disconnect service, free of charge (during regular business hours), to allow for a customer to have a private tree removal company to remove the tree(s)



PLANTING GUIDELINES



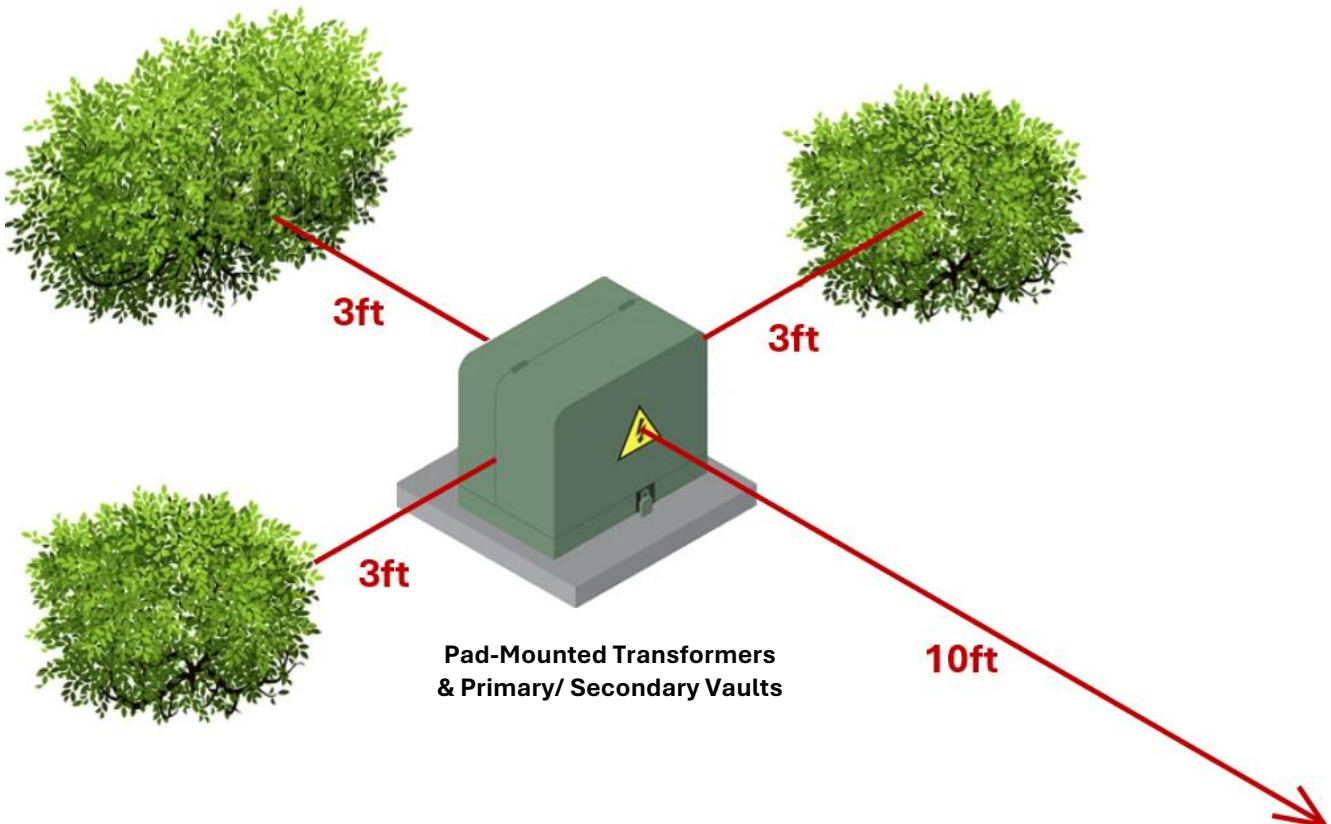


*NOTE

GDE REQUIRES A MINIMUM CLEARANCE OF 15' BETWEEN TREES/ BRANCHES AND POWER LINES. HOWEVER, IF A TREE WILL REACH A MATURE HEIGHT OF 30', IT SHOULD BE PLANTED 30' FROM THE POWER LINES. THIS REDUCES THE RISK THAT IT WILL NEED TO BE REMOVED IN THE FUTURE.

SMALLER SHRUBS AND BUSHES SHOULD BE TRIMMED SO THAT THERE IS A CLEAR AREA WITHIN A 10' RADIUS OF THE POLE.

LARGE	MEDIUM	SMALL	SHRUBS
MATURE HEIGHT > 50'	MATURE HEIGHT 30'-50'	MATURE HEIGHT 20'-30'	MATURE HEIGHT < 20'
SUGAR MAPLE	AMERICAN YELLOWWOOD	REDBUDS	DOUBLEFILE VIBURNUMS
BALD CYPRESS	BLACK GUM (TUPELO)	CREPE MYRTLE	LEATHERLEAF VIBURNUMS
DAWN REDWOOD	LACEBACK ELM	TRIDENT MAPLE	AMERICAN BEAUTYBERRY
GREEN GIANT ARBORVITAE	PRINCETON ELM	PAPERBARK MAPLE	EMERALD GREEN
SOUTHERN RED OAKS	AMERICAN HOLLY	FLOWERING CHERRIES	FLOWERING FORSYTHIA
SHUMARD RED OAKS	FOSTER #2 HOLLY	FLOWERING DOGWOODS	GLOSSY ABELIA
SOUTHERN MAGNOLIA	SAUCER MAGNOLIA	NELLIE R. STEVENS HOLLY	SCHIP LAURELS
BUR WHITE OAKS	STAR MAGNOLIA		
CHINKAPIN WHITE OAKS	SWEETBAY MAGNOLIA		
	OCTOBER GLORY MAPLE		



FAQ

- **How will I know that tree crews are working in my neighborhood?** We will place door hangers in neighborhoods a couple weeks before crews will begin their work.
- **Why does GDE trim trees?** Tree trimming as preventative maintenance of our system helps to prevent power outages and allows us to provide you with the most reliable service possible. Since we began our tree-trimming program, the number of tree-related outages has decreased significantly. Additionally, ensuring a clear path around our equipment helps to keep our employees and the public safe.
- **How are trees trimmed?** Refer to the “Trimming Guidelines” section for more information on how GDE trims trees on the system.
- **Who will clean up any debris left after trimming?** GDE contractors will remove and/or chip tree debris from our normal trimming activities. GDE does not remove tree debris caused by a storm or tree/limb failure. For emergency restoration of power, GDE crews may need to cut broken and/or uprooted trees to make repairs to our lines, however the property owner will be responsible for removing the debris in that case. GDE does not grind stumps.
- **Will GDE ever cut down a tree?** In some cases, it is best to remove the tree. For example, trees growing directly under or close to power lines can be difficult to trim. Candidates for tree removal are assessed on an individual basis. [Please contact GDE at 615-452-5152 if you have concerns about a tree near the power lines.](#)
- **Where should I plant trees to avoid future problems?** Trees grow to varying heights. Before planting, visualize the height and spread of a mature tree in relation to nearby power lines. Follow our minimum planting clearances to avoid future tree trimming. Refer to the graphics on pgs. 6-7 for more information on our planting guidelines.
- **Can GDE legally trim trees?** Courts in Tennessee support a public utility's right to trim and remove trees, both within and outside of the right-of-way. According to the Municipal Electric Plant Law of 1935, GDE has the power to purchase, construct, maintain and improve the electric system and to "do all acts and things necessary and convenient" to carry out the power given.
- **Will GDE trim around the light on my property?** GDE will only perform necessary maintenance trimming on street or private lights (and the secondary lines that serve them). GDE does not perform any trimming to improve the light pattern produced by the lights.
- **Will GDE trim around my service wire?** GDE does not perform any preventative tree-trimming maintenance on service wires. Service wires are the customer's responsibility to maintain.
- **Who can I contact for additional questions?** [For additional information, or to speak to someone about trees on your property, you can call GDE at 615-452-5152 \(Monday-Friday, 7:00AM to 4:00PM\).](#)

