

Recommended Setbacks for New Transmission Lines

FERC recommends that new transmission lines should have set back distances equal to the mature height of existing and future native trees outside of the right-of-way.

FERC Recommendation, 2012

“Preventing fall-ins from both inside and outside the right-of-way is easier if utilities consider vegetation management needs when siting new transmission lines and acquiring new easements. Therefore, staff recommends that utilities carefully assess vegetation and growth rates in the area of planned lines in order to establish the appropriate right-of-way width. ***For example, if native trees have a mature height of 100 feet, the easement should cover an area wide enough to ensure that existing and future trees outside of the right-of-way will not fall into the facilities (emphasis added).***”

Source: Report on Transmission Facility Outages during the Northeast Snowstorm of October 29–30, 2011: Causes and Recommendations, prepared by the Staffs of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, p. 49.

FERC Recommendation, 2004

“Easement documents should clearly provide the utility with rights to establish and maintain appropriate clearances under and adjacent to the proposed lines while utilizing all appropriate IVM practices. The ROW width should be determined based on the following objective: “No vegetation, or parts of vegetation, shall be allowed to grow or fall into the transmission facilities.” ***For example, if native trees have a mature height of 100 feet, the “ideal” initial easement should be wide enough to ensure that existing and future trees (along the side of the ROW) will not, by accident or design, fall into the facilities (emphasis added).***”

Source: UTILITY VEGETATION MANAGEMENT FINAL REPORT, MARCH 2004. FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION, UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. COMMISSIONED TO SUPPORT THE FEDERAL INVESTIGATION OF THE AUGUST 14, 2003 NORTHEAST BLACKOUT, p. 71