Emerald Ash Borer Program

Proactively managing unhealthy trees in transmission rights of way

Dead and dying ash trees are becoming a widespread problem in the Midwest because of a little green bug. The emerald ash borer (EAB), a wood-boring beetle native to Asia, was first detected in Michigan in 2002 and has killed hundreds of millions of ash trees throughout the country. The beetle is about one-half inch long and metallic green. Its larvae tunnel through the wood just under the bark of ash trees and can kill even healthy trees within one to four years.

The rapid decline of ash trees is changing the face of our landscape and presenting problems for property owners, municipalities, utilities, nursery operators and forest products industries. These trees can also cause problems along Duke Energy's rights of way for electric transmission lines.

To help provide reliability of our service to customers, Duke Energy has implemented an additional approach to remove living, dead or dying ash trees to reduce the risk of trees falling onto power lines and our facilities.

Duke Energy Transmission Vegetation Management

Duke Energy manages the grid to provide safe and reliable operation while adhering to local regulations and its easement rights. Before deciding to remove a tree, we first evaluate its health and proximity to the power lines.

What can our customers expect?

- Duke Energy and our contractors value being good stewards to our community, and we work hard to minimize impacts to the affected areas.
- Property owners, Duke Energy customers and/or residents along transmission rights of way with living, dead or dying ash trees that threaten the power system are contacted a minimum of two weeks prior to work.
- The easements obtained by Duke Energy allow us to remove any tree that poses a threat to the safe and reliable operation of the line.
- We use qualified, trained professionals to cut down the trees.
- Crews use bucket trucks, chippers and/or specialized equipment to perform their work. Specialized equipment is often needed because dying ash trees are too unstable to climb.
- Pedestrians and motorists should exercise caution when approaching tree crews. Pedestrians should stay outside of coned areas and motorist should slow down and/or move over when approaching crew vehicles and equipment.
- In maintained or landscaped areas, tree debris is chipped to the extent possible, the tree branches are cut into manageable sizes and stacked in place. In unmaintained areas, the trees are moved to the edge of the right of way and debris is left to naturally biodegrade.
- Upon completion of the project, the surface area of the easement will be restored as closely as possible to its original condition.

Emerald Ash Borer Quick Facts

- Trees weakened by the beetle can fall and hit power lines, resulting in power outages.
- In the United States, only ash trees are at risk for infestation.
- Signs of infestation include:
  - Dead tree branches near the top of a tree
  - Bark splitting
  - Zigzag tunnels under the bark
  - D-shaped exit holes
  - Extensive woodpecker activity
  - Leafy shoots sprouting from the trunk

More information

For more information about EAB, please visit **emeraldashborer.info**.

To learn more about Duke Energy's Vegetation Management Program, visit **duke-energy.com/trees**.

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