

# PRUNING AND REMOVAL PROGRAM FAQ



The safety of our customers, communities and employees is our No. 1 priority. State regulations require utilities to trim trees or vegetation so they don't grow into or fall into high-voltage power lines, which could not only cause a power outage but could spark a fire or be a danger to the public.

SCE inspects approximately 900,000 trees annually, including 400,000 trees in high fire risk areas. The company prunes nearly 700,000 trees per year.

In high fire risk areas, SCE will trim or remove trees to maintain a minimum 12-foot clearance (at the time of trim) from power lines to prevent vegetation from coming into contact with electrical equipment and potentially sparking a fire. Tall trees up to 200 feet from high-voltage wires will be assessed to determine if they could fall into or have vegetation like palm fronds that could blow into power lines.

Trees that overhang wires, have weak branches or are dead, diseased or dying may be removed if they show a risk of falling into the lines.

## WHAT ARE THE RULES FOR TRIMMING TREES?

SCE adopted the California Public Utilities Commission's 2017 guidelines for tree trimming. In high fire risk areas, SCE is trimming a 12-foot clearance (at the time of trim) from a power line to ensure the minimum required clearance is never threatened. A map of California's high fire risk areas can be found at [ja.cpuc.ca.gov/firemap/](http://ja.cpuc.ca.gov/firemap/).

Based on SCE risk assessments and in the interest of public safety, SCE may also trim vegetation outside the high fire risk areas to meet similar specifications.

## WHAT DOES SCE CONSIDER WHEN PRUNING A TREE?

SCE considers the potential risk of the tree contacting energized utility power lines. Trees are trimmed or pruned to protect public safety and safeguard the reliability of electric equipment. They are trimmed in accordance with national standards, which are designed to protect the health of trees. The pruning focuses on line clearance and does not necessarily consider the aesthetics.

## WHY ARE SOME TREES CUT BACK SO DRASTICALLY?

In some cases, the tree's size, location and structure may leave SCE with no choice but to remove a significant amount of the tree's foliage to protect the safety of the customer and their property, as well as meet the state clearance requirements.

## WHY DOES SCE TOP TREES?

SCE follows utility best practices when it trims trees for public safety. In cases where a tree is growing directly under a power line and when there are no pruning alternatives, SCE will top the tree to create a safety zone between the tree and the power lines. In these cases, SCE advises removal of the tree and will recommend a replacement from its "[Right Tree, Right Place](#)" brochure.

## DOES SCE USE ARBORISTS? WHAT IS THEIR ROLE?

SCE's vegetation management personnel responsible for overseeing field operations are arborists certified by the International Society of Arboriculture. SCE's vegetation contractors are also experienced utility arborists and are supervised by ISA-certified arborists.

## WHAT'S THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PUBLIC AND OUR CUSTOMERS?

Safety is everyone's responsibility. Customers need to responsibly plan their landscape and plant trees and vegetation that take into consideration whether they will grow into power lines. SCE's "[Right Tree, Right Place](#)" brochure provides some guidance on making landscape decisions. If you see a tree or vegetation that could be hazardous, please contact SCE's Customer Support at (800) 655-4555 or [sce.com](#).

## CAN I HAVE MY OWN TREE TRIMMER PRUNE MY TREE?

Only specially trained tree trimmers can work near power lines. Homeowners who hire their own tree trimmers to prune or remove trees near wires must first notify SCE. This includes work on any tree within 10 feet of SCE lines or trees that could come in contact with wires or equipment if they fall.

SCE offers a free "make-safe" program. As part of this program, SCE will assess and remove portions of trees to a level that would allow other workers to safely remove or prune the rest of the tree. For all inquiries, please contact Customer Support at (800) 655-4555 or [sce.com](#).

## HOW WILL I KNOW SCE IS GOING TO TRIM MY TREES?

After SCE completes its tree inspections, we will attempt to notify customers, via door hangers, at least 30 days before any work. We will attempt to notify customers again with a second door hanger 24-48 hours before trimming any tree(s). The door hanger contains contact information for the tree inspector should you have any questions or concerns.

## WHAT IS SCE'S AUTHORITY TO ACCESS PROPERTY?

Under new California laws, after providing homeowners in high fire risk areas with notice and an opportunity to be heard, SCE has the authority to access private property and to prune or remove vegetation as needed to ensure public safety and maintain reliable electrical service. Our foremost priority is to protect customers, their property and the public.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU MUST REMOVE A TREE?

SCE or an approved contractor will attempt to talk to the property owner to explain the tree removal process. SCE or an approved contractor will cut down the tree at no charge to the customer. The crew will dispose of the tree.

## WILL I HAVE TO PAY FOR SCE'S TREE TRIMMING OR REMOVAL?

No. All tree trimming is done as part of SCE's annual vegetation management work at no additional cost to the customer.

## HOW CAN I IDENTIFY LEGITIMATE TREE TRIMMERS AND AVOID SCAMMERS?

SCE employees have their SCE ID badge displayed on their person for customers to see. All SCE contractors will have an SCE-approved contractor decal and an Edison logo on their truck. Be suspicious of anyone who arrives at your house without an appointment asking to check an appliance or wiring or tells you to leave your residence temporarily because of an electrical problem inside or outside your home.



If you have questions about SCE's vegetation management activities or if you have any concerns about trees near SCE power lines, contact SCE Customer Support at **(800) 655-4555** or email [safetrees@sce.com](mailto:safetrees@sce.com).