



## **Tree Safety and Vegetation Management FAQs**

Liberty is dedicated to providing safe and reliable electric service to our customers. Liberty invests approximately \$14 million each year to prune or remove trees and branches around electrical infrastructure to reduce outages and fire-related risks. Liberty's vegetation management program is committed to promoting healthy forest canopies through professional arboriculture and integrated vegetation management practices.

Below are some frequently asked questions about the vegetation management program.

### **How does Liberty decide what trees and/or branches need to be pruned or removed?**

As a utility regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), Liberty maintains clearance between vegetation and electrical infrastructure to support public safety and electric system reliability. The vegetation management department utilizes light detection and ranging (LiDAR), physical inspection, customer reports, and other tools to determine when and where vegetation is no longer meeting clearance requirements. You can find additional information on the [tree safety page](#) of the Liberty website.

### **What is the clearance requirement?**

A clearance requirement is the minimum distance allowed between vegetation and electrical infrastructure. Liberty's system is composed of different wire and voltage types, each having their own unique clearance requirements. Poles that carry non-exempt hardware (known as subject poles) require a ten-foot radius of ground clearance around the pole and eight-foot vertical clearance from encroaching branches and vegetation. Additionally, when vegetation is pruned, it is often pruned further back than the clearance requirement to account for environmental factors such as wind sway and snow load as well as several years' worth of growth.



Hazardous trees or parts of trees with the potential to fall into utility lines are removed or pruned to help prevent contact with electrical infrastructure. For more information, please see CALFIRE's [Power Line Fire Prevention Field Guide](#).

### **How does Liberty determine where vegetation management work will be performed?**

Liberty routinely inspects and monitors vegetation to evaluate the need for vegetation treatments. Liberty performs scheduled maintenance (each circuit every three years) and unplanned maintenance as needed to address storm damage, tree mortality, or other identified hazards or vegetation encroachment.

### **How will I be notified if my neighborhood is scheduled for vegetation management work?**

During tree inspections and scheduled tree work, authorized Liberty representatives will attempt to contact you about plans to remove hazardous vegetation in your area. If Liberty is unable to contact you, representatives will leave a door hanger with a number that you can call. Liberty may also call you or mail notifications before work is scheduled to begin. Property owners will be given notice regarding tree removals on their property unless the work is considered an emergency. Please make sure Liberty has your current contact information.

### **What do I do if I see a problem?**

If you are concerned or have questions about a tree or other vegetation and its potential risk to Liberty's electrical infrastructure, please visit the Liberty website and complete a [Tree Inspection Request Form](#). Once your request is submitted, Liberty's staff of ISA certified arborists will visit your site to determine if vegetation work needs to be done. **For your safety, customers should never attempt to prune or remove trees in the vicinity of power lines.**

If you are reporting an **electrical emergency**, please call 911 and then Liberty Dispatch at 1-844-245-6868.



## **What can I expect once a Tree Inspection Request has been submitted?**

1. Property owner or resident submits a tree inspection request
2. Liberty assigns the request to an arborist to respond (Note: inspection or response may take several weeks from the time the inspection request is received, depending on regularly scheduled work and other priorities)
3. Arborist inspects tree/vegetation and determines if work is required
4. Arborist notifies requestor of findings
5. If work is required, a work order is generated and assigned to a tree crew
6. Work is scheduled and property owner/resident is notified

Total expected time frame from inspection request submission to tree work depends on tree and site conditions, tree crew and arborist resources available, and Liberty's maintenance schedule. It is typical for tree work identified as **non-emergency** to be included on the next scheduled maintenance cycle.

## **If Liberty removes a tree on my property, what happens to the wood debris?**

When a tree that requires removal is identified by an authorized Liberty representative, Liberty will provide notification of the tree removal prior to doing the work. At that time, you have the option to choose to have the wood removed off-site by the Liberty contractor performing the work or to keep the wood for your own purposes.

Wood is only removed if permission is granted by the landowner and if it is safe and reasonable to do so. Wood removal is sometimes performed after the initial tree cutting and may be delayed due to inclement weather, equipment resources, and permitting requirements.

## **If Liberty removes a tree on my property, will I be reimbursed or receive a replacement tree?**

Liberty does not reimburse customers for removal of trees and vegetation to protect



its infrastructure. However, Liberty provides replacement vegetation to promote compatible plant communities adjacent to power lines with its Community Canopy Program.

The Community Canopy Program provides replacement vegetation in response to tree mortality, Liberty's routine vegetation management work, and as an incentive to promote "right tree, right place" principles to homeowners. Liberty advocates planting vegetation that is sustainable, fire-resilient, and compatible with the use of the land as an electrical infrastructure right-of-way. A well-planned yard contains vegetation that grows well in the soil and moisture of your neighborhood and is placed properly to avoid growing into power lines.

Liberty customers can reserve free compatible plants here:

<http://www.arboday.org/libertyca>

### **I have cables that go from the pole to my home. Will you prune vegetation near these wires?**

The power line running from the pole to your home is a coated, low-voltage line called a service drop. Liberty monitors service drops and other low-voltage lines for tree limbs or other vegetation inflicting strain as part of its routine inspection and maintenance program. All other tree-related maintenance in the vicinity of service drops is the responsibility of the property owner.

If you wish to perform work on a tree or other vegetation near your service drop, please contact Liberty's engineering department to turn off power so you can perform the work safely. Liberty will come to your residence and disconnect the service wire in the morning so you can remove the encroaching vegetation (during which time you will not have power to your home), and then come back in the afternoon to reconnect your service wire. (This service disconnect is referred to as an AM/PM). **Do not attempt to do maintenance of any vegetation touching your primary service wire without contacting us first to temporarily disconnect your power.** You can call Liberty at 800-782-2506 to schedule an appointment with our engineering department.



### **What do I do if my service drop is attached to a tree?**

If you have a service drop attached to a tree, please contact Liberty's engineering department. One of Liberty's planners or engineers will need to investigate the site for potential re-route options of the service drop, which may require a complete line re-route or setting a pole to attach the service drop to. Please contact Liberty at 800-782-2506 to schedule an appointment with our engineering department.

### **What do I do if I need to remove a tree near lines that are not a threat to Liberty's electrical infrastructure?**

If you have a tree you wish to remove but does not require removal for Liberty infrastructure, please check your local ordinances and requirements for obtaining a tree removal permit. Once a tree removal permit is obtained (if required), and if the tree is within 10 feet of power lines, Liberty can assist by removing limbs and other parts of the tree that are within 10 feet of high voltage power lines, so you or your private contractor can safely perform the remainder of the removal work. Please note that the site, tree, and its proximity to power lines are required to be evaluated by Liberty before scheduling the work.

Liberty may elect to have the customer or private contractor schedule an AM/PM (described above) if the tree is close to the service drop or require the customer or private contractor to contact Liberty to turn off power to safely perform the work.

Please visit our website for more information or contact us at

[CAtree@libertyutilities.com](mailto:CAtree@libertyutilities.com)