

## Utility Line Clearance Standards – Communications (proposed by AT&T)

AT&T has operational agreements with both major power companies to share costs for trees removed as the result of either a major storm or for a mutually agreed hazard tree. The trimming guidelines provided below are utilized by technicians or contractors when trimming branches for the business as usual scenario.

AT&T's practices address utility line clearance in the communications gain on the utility pole which is approximately 16 feet above ground level. The communications gain is below the power gain which is located at the top of the pole and is where power facilities are placed. Communications providers do not face the same challenges as power companies in regards to tree trimming due to the nature of our facilities as well as our attachment location on the utility pole.

Under a business as usual scenario, AT&T will trim branches as necessary when trees interfere with our ability to place or replace facilities. When specific hazard trees are identified which pose a significant risk to our communication facilities, AT&T utilizes certified tree contractors to remove the hazard tree.

### Tree Trimming Guidelines

This section outlines the principles that should guide telecommunication employees and tree removal contractors engaged in "Line Clearance" type work. All work shall be performed in a safe and professional manner consistent with good service, while still maintaining the health and appearance of the trees and shrubs alongside and under telecommunication lines.

As a result of the environmental awareness in our country, people are concerned for the welfare of our trees, particularly those trees that grow along the roadside. Therefore, the utmost care and proper pruning practices must be used in line clearance operations.

The goal of **construction trimming**, either road-side or right-of-way, is to provide a clear path for the construction of a new pole line or cable. The "clear path" will include removal of all undesirable woody plants under the pole line, and pruning trees not removed to keep them from interfering with telecommunication facilities for a 3- to 5-year period.

Local policy will decide how much trimming will be performed by telecommunication employees, but they can do telecommunication trimming as assigned. Trimming by telecommunication employees should be confined to those areas that can be done from the ground with pruning tools, from a ladder, or an aerial lift vehicle. Many phases of tree trimming and pruning require experience and sophisticated tools unavailable to telecommunication employees; therefore, such activities as joint trimming (trimming both electric and

telecommunication lines), dismantling large trees, and rope climbing, shall be performed by outside contractors.

Employees and tree removal contract personnel must consider the appearance and welfare of all trees during trimming operations; not only from the standpoint of maintaining the natural beauty of these trees, but also from the standpoint of successfully maintaining the aerial plant and promoting good public relations.