

# Trimming and removing trees for safe, reliable power on Bainbridge Island

Trimming trees along power lines on Hidden Cove Road in summer 2023.

Trees that grow near power lines and other electrical equipment can present challenges for delivering safe, reliable power. On Bainbridge Island, trees cause most power outages – when branches touch power lines or when trees fall into lines. In addition, downed power lines are dangerous. They can be energized and hazardous to public safety.

To ensure safe, reliable power for Bainbridge Island customers and meet applicable state and federal requirements, PSE trims or removes trees that present a risk to power lines and other electrical equipment. This work helps keep the lights on at homes and businesses, and keeps the community and our crews safe.

## Minimizing impacts to trees

The Bainbridge Island community has consistently said that you value trees and desire to minimize environmental impacts. PSE shares these values and works to balance our obligation to provide safe, reliable power with retaining the natural beauty of Bainbridge Island.

When we need to manage vegetation during system maintenance and improvements, we intend to remove as few trees as possible. We only remove trees that are incompatible with constructing or operating our power lines, substations or other equipment. If we cannot avoid impacts, then we commit to fully restoring or mitigating for those impacts consistent with applicable laws and regulations.

In addition, we rely on proven industry standards, best management practices and specially trained arborists to trim and remove trees.

## Identifying trees that present a risk to electrical equipment

To determine whether a tree presents a risk to a power line, substation or other equipment, PSE gathers and records information on the trees. We then consider a variety of factors about a tree as it relates to a project design or existing infrastructure:

- **How close is the tree to the equipment or line?** Generally, we analyze trees that are within 25 feet from the equipment or pole locations along the corridor to determine if they have the potential to fall on the equipment or line.
- **What is the mature height of the tree?** Generally, we analyze trees that reach over 25 feet in height at maturity and are within 25 feet from the equipment or pole locations along the corridor to determine if they can remain. Terrain, manmade features and other factors are considered when looking at tree height.



Surveying trees to identify those that pose a risk to the power line.



- **How extensive are the tree's limbs?** Some trees have extensive canopy that can interfere with the equipment or line. Continually trimming or topping the tree compromises the health and stability of the tree; therefore, removing and replacing the tree could be a better option.
- **How healthy is the tree?** Weakened, diseased and structurally defective trees are more likely to cause problems during storms and high winds and should be removed before a problem occurs.

Usually we do not know which specific trees the project will impact until completing the project design. During design, we make decisions on details such as which side of the road the line will be on (for new power lines), pole configuration and pole placement (including span length) and layout of the substation yard. These decisions inform how many trees may be trimmed or removed.

## Replacing trees we remove

PSE is committed to working with property owners and the City of Bainbridge Island to replace trees we remove consistent with applicable laws and regulations. If one or more trees on your property are identified for trimming or removal, PSE will contact you about the trees to be trimmed or removed.

## Ongoing tree maintenance

During project construction PSE trims and removes trees and vegetation that present risk, but we also perform this work as part of our ongoing maintenance. Year-round, throughout our service area, we inspect and manage trees and vegetation near our electrical equipment to address those that could cause an outage or safety concern. For more information about PSE's approach to tree trimming, removal and restoration, visit [pse.com/trees](https://pse.com/trees).

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Example of trees that have grown into a power line and need to be trimmed.



Trimming limbs that have grown too close to power lines.