

TALKING POINTS – TRANSMISSION LINE TREE CLEARING

- As utilities look to enhance reliability and safety, it is important they enforce existing vegetation management easement rights regarding overhead lines. The removal of trees under high-voltage lines rather than pruning, serves to minimize the chance of any vegetation contact that might interfere with the transmission lines.
- Since 2001 to present, Jersey Central Power & Light (JCP&L) has successfully prevented all but one tree-related bulk transmission outage. To insure this level of performance continues, the transmission rights-of-way must be routinely inspected and cleared of incompatible vegetation. In many cases, this will take the form of clearing trees in areas where they may have been pruned in the past.
- JCP&L is aware that tree clearing is an emotional issue for property owners – but the work must be done in order to remain in compliance with State and Federal mandates. Such mandates include those of the Board of Public Utilities, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the North American Electric Reliability Council (NERC).
- In April 2005, FERC issued its Policy Statement on Matters Related to Bulk Power System Reliability. FERC stated it expected public utilities to comply with the reliability standards of NERC and to remedy any deficiencies identified in NERC compliance audit reports and recommendations. NERC was formed to improve the reliability and security of the bulk power system in North America.
- Effective December 18, 2006, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities enacted regulations which require clearing under transmission lines wide enough so that no vegetation or parts of vegetation will grow or fall into the transmission lines. Additionally, the regulations state that electric utilities shall not allow vegetation that grows taller than 15' at maturity to grow anywhere within a transmission line right-of-way. JCP&L's vegetation management program is designed to adhere to these regulations.
- Effective February 7, 2006, the NERC Standard FAC-003-1 – Transmission Vegetation Management Program was adopted. This standard is intended to improve the reliability of the electric transmission systems across the country by eliminating transmission outages from vegetation located on transmission rights-of-way (ROW) and minimizing outages from vegetation located adjacent to the ROW, maintaining safe clearances between transmission lines and vegetation on and along transmission ROW, and establishing a system for reporting vegetation-related outages of the transmission systems (+200 kV) to the respective Regional Reliability Councils and NERC. JCP&L's vegetation management program is designed to adhere to the NERC standards.

- While working diligently to comply with legal requirements, JCP&L works hard to make sure property owners know what to expect when vegetation management activities are planned on their property. JCP&L's policy is to make every reasonable effort to provide homeowners at least a week's notice before any vegetation management work begins. Typically, the utility's tree contractors will go door to door – and if the customer is not home, a card explaining the work schedule is left at the residence with a telephone number to call with any questions.
- In most cases, stumps will be cut off flush with the ground. Trees that are located in fence rows or that contain metal, cement, rocks, etc. will be cut above the interfering material. As part of JCP&L's general policy, stumps are not removed.
- JCP&L does not pay for replacement trees.
- Once the high-voltage transmission corridors are clear, property owners should not plant trees in the right-of-way. If you are considering planting shrubs on any transmission right-of-way, please contact the FirstEnergy forestry staff.
- For additional information about our tree clearing practices or advice on planting compatible vegetation within a transmission right-of-way, go to www.firstenergycorp.com. Select "**Jersey Central Power & Light**", then *click* on "**Safety**" and look for the "**Maintaining Trees**" or "**Selecting the Right Tree**" links.