

LANDSCAPING AROUND ELECTRIC EQUIPMENT

Electric Utilities understands that you value the appearance of your home and commercial landscaping. Curb appeal is one of the primary reasons for underground utilities. However, those underground electric lines must surface somewhere if they are to serve the public's electrical equipment. In areas with underground facilities, pad mount transformers and switchgear, or "those green boxes," are placed at selected intervals along main electric lines near streets and highways. It is critical that the access or door to pad mount transformers and switchgear be kept clear for 12 feet. The non-door sides must have a three-foot clearance, free of obstacles. If landscaping is placed too close to the transformer, service restoration efforts can be delayed; also, not enough air circulation can cause equipment failure. Workers must sometimes cut down the plantings to perform their restoration work. Below are pictures of problems that can occur plus some landscaping checkpoints for dependable, uninterrupted service.



- ✓ Do not plant ivy or other climbing plants as they grow into the metal enclosures and cause problems.
- ✓ Grass, gravel, or small rocks are recommended within the three- or ten- foot free zone.
- ✓ Avoid delicate flowerbed plantings that may be harmed.
- ✓ Large rocks should be placed at least ten feet away from all sides of the equipment.

- ✓ Remember that crews need access to the equipment in winter and summer. Electric equipment must be visually and physically accessible to utility crews and meter readers at all times.
- ✓ For underground power lines, trees should be planted far enough away from the pad mount equipment so at maturity they meet clearance requirements.
- ✓ Trees, shrubs, and other landscape plantings should not be placed on the utility easement above underground electric cable.
- ✓ Do not change the grade around equipment to avoid problems with access and depth requirements for buried cables.
- ✓ For overhead power lines, look up when planting a tree. Avoid spots under overhead power lines even if you want to plant a small tree. Plant it so that upon maturity it will not reach within 15 feet of an overhead power line.
- ✓ If concrete is to be poured near a pole, the concrete needs to be at least 24 inches away from the pole. Electric Utilities discourages the placement of concrete near any power line equipment.
- ✓ Consult with your electric provider if you plan to build, grade, or construct any type of structure near electric equipment.