



Tree Trimming FAQs

1. When does MLGW plan to trim branches in my neighborhood?

Our goal is to clear 1,491 right-of-way miles per year which equates to a third of the total amount of miles that serve all of Shelby County. Based on the data we have gathered; we plan to start in the areas that are in the most need. We have divided up our area of distribution into three areas, each of which will be assigned to one of the three vendors we contract. Please visit our tree trimming dashboard for updates. ([link to the dashboard](#))

2. Why are we focused on tree trimming?

Our tree program is key to preventing power outages. When tree limbs grow near overhead electrical wires, they can contact the wires and become energized. A live tree conducts electricity because of its sap and water content. Water is an excellent conductor of electricity. Trees and wires are dangerous. Electrical power is strong enough to injure or kill humans.

Approximately 40% of our power outages are caused by trees. Wind can blow tree branches or the entire tree itself into power lines causing outages. Additionally, contact between two or more exposed wires can cause a fault. In 2023, the storms we experienced accounted for 60% of outages.

1. Look for powerlines before pruning trees and large shrubs. If lines are near, do not attempt any tree work.
2. Never climb a tree where limbs can encounter overhead electrical wires.
3. Never extend long-handled saws or pruners into a tree without checking for power lines.
4. Do not move ladders or long-handled pruning tools around the yard without first looking up.

Our trimmers have the necessary training, qualifications, and equipment to work near the lines. Pruning trees maintains clear access to our electrical equipment and wires, and this clearance helps to keep our workers and the public safe.

3. How are trees trimmed?

Our goal is to keep trees healthy while making sure they don't interfere with power lines.

4. Who cleans up the debris after trimming?

During normal trimming, our contractors will remove and/or chip tree limbs and debris from your property. However, MLGW does not remove tree debris caused by a storm.

5. Will MLGW ever cut down a tree?

Trees growing directly under or close to power lines can be difficult to trim. In some cases, it is best to remove the tree. Candidates for tree removal are assessed on an individual basis.

6. Can MLGW legally trim trees?

Courts in Tennessee support a public utility's right to trim and remove trees, both within and outside of the right-of-way. According to the Municipal Electric Plant Law of 1935 and the Metro Charter, Appendix III, Article 42, MLGW has the power to purchase, construct, and improve the electric system and to "do all acts and things necessary and convenient" to carry out the power given.

7. Who can I contact for additional questions?

Visit mlgw.com/treetrimming for more information or call (901) 544-6549 to report a tree that interferes with the service line.

8. What can homeowners do to help?

If you are a property owner with very large trees, it is incumbent upon you to trim those trees.

9. What is MLGW's plan of action moving forward?

Our goal is to clear 1,491 right-of-way miles of obstructing tree branches each year. We are exploring the idea of supporting legislation to identify and remove any diseased or distressed tree from public property that poses a risk to our infrastructure. View our line clearance brochure or more details. ([link line clearance brochure](#))