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Tip of the Month

Help NOVEC prevent power outages. Report any potentially hazardous trees or bushes around power lines by calling NOVEC's Customer Care team at 703-335-0500.

What's Current

MARCH 2024

HOW TO HELP PREVENT OUTAGES THIS SPRING

by Robin Earl

NOVEC maintains a comprehensive tree-trimming schedule throughout its service area all year long. To manage the Co-op's 1,800 miles of rights of way, NOVEC trims close to 500 miles every year. "About 75 tree-trimming professionals from three different contractors cover every inch of our territory every three-and-a-half years," said Rick Carpenter, manager of NOVEC's vegetation management department.

But a lot can happen between scheduled trimmings, and NOVEC members help bring potential issues to the Co-op's attention. "About 50% of the unscheduled work we do is because our members tell us about dead trees or limbs touching or getting too close to a power line," said Carpenter. "We create several thousand trouble tickets a year to handle trees that could present problems."

Sometimes a tree dies unexpectedly and threatens to fall on a power line; other times a tree grows too close to infrastructure. Trees cause more than 700 outage cases annually and account for almost 40% of all outage minutes. This includes live trees, dead trees, and trees both inside and outside NOVEC easements.

Review landscaping guidelines and a helpful video at novec.com/vegetation.

PROTECT POLES AND POWER LINES

- Be aware of power lines when planting new trees. Refrain from planting trees in NOVEC's maintenance corridor. Contact NOVEC's Vegetation Management department at 703-392-1600 or vegetationmgmt@novec.com with questions before you plant.
- Keep objects with metal away from power lines including streamers, metallic helium balloons, sky-lanterns, kites, and drones. **NEVER** try and remove anything caught in a power line or pole. Call NOVEC for assistance.
- Don't nail signs to utility poles — it's destructive. Over time, water seeps into holes surrounding nails, damaging the pole. Eventually the pole deteriorates and has to be replaced.

Plant Trees Safely

Before you dig, call 811 to locate buried utility lines.

LOW TREE ZONE

Avoid planting within 20 ft. of power lines. If planting is unavoidable, only plant shrubs and small trees that reach a mature height of 15 ft. or less.

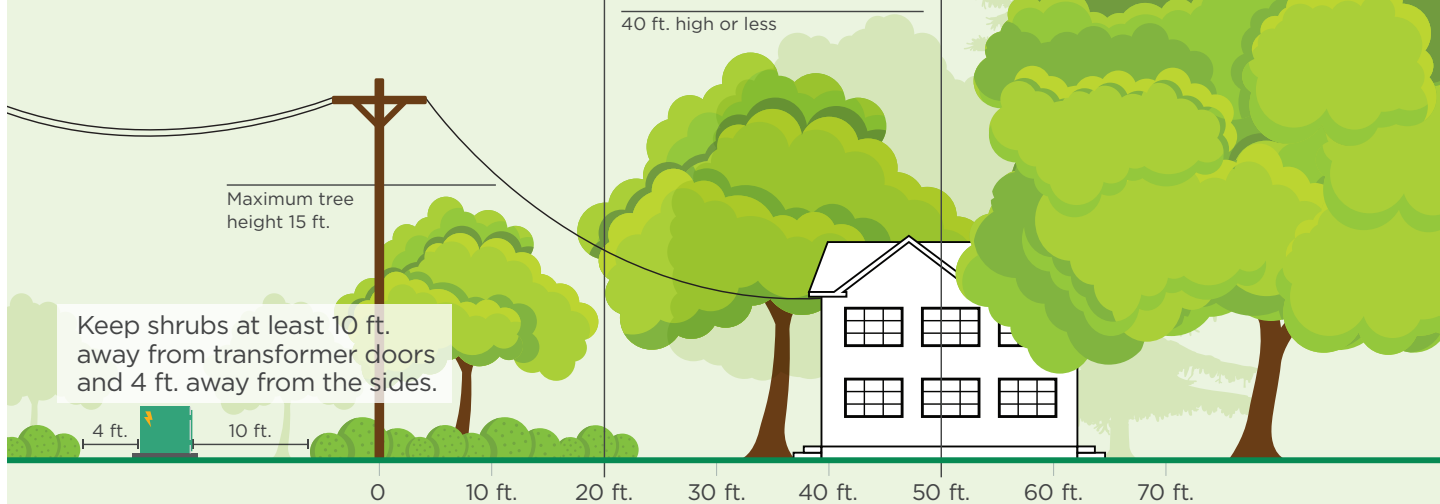
MEDIUM TREE ZONE

Plant medium trees (under 40 ft. when mature) at least 25 ft. away from power lines.

LARGE TREE ZONE

Plant large trees (over 40 ft. when mature) at least 50 ft. away from power lines.

Over 40 ft.



WHY DIGITAL CLOCKS BLINK AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

NOVEC Staff Report

You wake up, roll over to check your electric digital clock and see it's blinking. You know the flow of electricity has been interrupted, but you didn't notice a power outage. You wonder, what happened?

Why Clocks Blink

Interrupted power causes older digital electric clocks to blink. Often, a wind-blown tree branch, a jumping squirrel, or a big bird landing on a power line is to blame. Even though the contact may be just for a second, it can short a circuit.

A device called an oil-circuit recloser (OCR) will open to stop the short and then close again. Even though the OCR opens and closes quickly, the process may require resetting your digital room and appliance clocks. Yes, it's annoying, but the OCR allows power to flow to avoid an extended power outage. If

a branch or animal does more than brush against a power line, the short circuit could become a full-blown outage. The outage protects the line as well as Co-op lineworkers who arrive to restore service.

Avoid Blinks

Customers can avoid blinking lights by purchasing clocks with a battery backup. Just be sure to check the batteries regularly, like once a year when Daylight Savings time begins.

Get Surge Protection

NOVEC Solutions, a Co-op subsidiary, has partnered with HomeServe to offer three different Surge Help Home Electronics Loss Protection plans. These plans help cover damage to appliances when a lightning strike or a surge occurs. Learn more at ProtectSurgeNOVEC.com.

