

HABITATS AND SPECIES PROTECTION

Threatened or endangered species are protected by Oncor’s staff of biologists, who conduct field reviews to ensure that habitats and species are preserved and protected. Great efforts are made to mitigate impact or in some cases relocate any migratory birds and threatened or endangered animals whose presence causes a reliability issue, according to all appropriate requirements. Oncor biologists closely watch transmission construction and maintenance projects to ensure that disturbances to wetlands, creeks, rivers and lakes are avoided and minimized. Sensitive cultural areas are also identified prior to maintenance and construction to minimize any impact to those areas.



The endangered Whooping Crane (Grus americana) migrates through Texas, often stopping to feed and rest at lakes or ponds. Oncor is committed to protecting this once nearly-extinct species.



The Houston Toad (Bufo houstonensis) and its breeding habitat is protected by Oncor and the USFWS to ensure the preservation of the endangered species.

Paige Najvar, USFWS

HOW OUR NEIGHBORS CAN HELP

- **Trimming:** Property owners should never attempt to trim or remove tree limbs near or adjacent to any power line. If you’re concerned about a tree that appears to be too close to a power line, contact Oncor at 888.875.6279.
- **Planning and Planting:** Trees and transmission lines don’t mix. Because different trees have different mature heights, it is safest to avoid the ROW. Contact Oncor at 888.875.6279 if you are planning to build or landscape near an easement or ROW.
- **Hazards:** Please contact Oncor at 888.875.6279 if a potential hazard or suspicious activity is discovered near our lines or equipment. If an immediate danger to people or property is seen, call 911 immediately.



MORE INFORMATION

Ask Oncor hotline: 888.875.6279

[www.AskOncor.com](http://www.AskOncor.com)

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WORKING TOGETHER  
WITH OUR NEIGHBORS:

UNDERSTANDING ONCOR  
TRANSMISSION RIGHTS OF WAY





## WHERE WE DO IT

Oncor takes great pride in delivering electricity to more than 3 million homes and businesses in approximately 400 cities across more than 90 Texas counties. As the state's largest transmission and distribution utility, Oncor owns and operates the largest electrical grid system in the state.



Part of delivering safe, reliable service involves maintaining transmission rights of way (ROW), the property immediately below and adjacent to our more than 15,000 miles of transmission lines. Maintaining these areas ensures the proper access to electric facilities for routine maintenance and long-term grid reliability needs. Our practices help avoid increased maintenance costs and hazardous electrical clearance violations.

## SAFEGUARDING ENERGY RELIABILITY

Oncor's processes for safeguarding the reliability of our transmission grid balance our customers' need for reliable energy with our commitment to the natural environment that surrounds our facilities. Those processes include:

- **Operations:**  
Using aerial and ground-based patrols to focus on vegetation, encroachments and construction activities.
- **Environmental Stewardship:**  
Conducting field assessments to determine if any environmental constraints exist that may need permitting prior to conducting work.
- **Vegetation Management:**  
Providing oversight of the tree trimming, mowing and herbicide application to control vegetation growth on ROW to ensure reliable service and access to facilities.



## WHY WE DO IT

We do it to ensure reliability. For example, 50 million people were without power when a massive power outage struck an electric utility in the northeast in August 2003. A major contributing factor to the extended outage was trees coming in contact with transmission lines.

As a result of that catastrophic event, new national standards with substantial penalties for non-compliance were created to keep vegetation from interfering with critical transmission lines. The standards were developed by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation under the direction of the U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.



To meet this standard, Oncor developed a transmission vegetation management plan. Oncor's ROW easements typically grant Oncor the right to remove trees and other obstructions and the right to access the property for inspection, repair and maintenance of the transmission lines.

Oncor applies the National Electric Safety Code to determine the minimum alternative vertical and horizontal clearances that are required to maintain a safe distance between electrical wires and surfaces like roads, rooftops and bodies of water.

Oncor also secures the proper permits to ensure the environmental protection of our communities, based on state and federal regulations.

Oncor's goal is to provide safe, reliable service to our customers, minimize any affects of an outage and remain good stewards of the environment.

## HOW WE DO IT

Oncor may own the ROW by deed or have specific rights and responsibilities in an easement agreement with private property owners. We collaborate with our neighbors and work diligently to resolve any issues that arise without compromising the safety and reliability of the electric grid.

Removal of trees in the ROW is necessary to promote long-term vegetation control, while allowing vegetation ground cover to remain. In cases where removal is not ideal or possible, trees and other vegetation are trimmed to achieve the necessary clearance using industry-approved methods and measurements. In some cases, selective herbicides approved by the Environmental Protection Agency are applied by licensed personnel to convert undesirable brush to low-growing vegetation and grasses. When vegetation is too tall or inappropriate for herbicide application, professional vegetation contractors use manual and mechanical clearing methods. In some cases, debris that results from the clearing of ROW is left to decompose and return nutrients to the soil, while also reducing the risk of soil erosion.

