




Jemez Mountains Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Jemez Mountains Electric Cooperative Vegetation Management Practices

Jemez Mountains Electric Cooperative (JMEC) maintains more than 4,000 miles of power lines in Rio Arriba, Sandoval, Santa Fe, McKinley and San Juan Counties. Part of maintaining these lines are to make sure that the lines are clear of anything that may come in contact with it. Trees are the primary cause of power outages for JMEC because they do grow up to or fall down on the lines. Clearing the right of way for the lines and substations is vital job to keep our community safe, ensure reliability and reduce the overall cost of energy.

Safety, Reliability and Cost

Trees and other vegetation can become energized if they contact high-voltage distribution lines. This could bring deadly voltage within the reach of people or pets. Equipment on the line recognizes when this happens and turns the power off. Sometimes it is momentary and it will energize again (that is what happens when the lights blink) and it will stay on if the condition has cleared (like a branch that fell on the line and then fell on the ground). If the condition persists the power will stay off until a trained journeyman linemen can patrol the line and remove the tree or other cause. Clearing trees before they get into the lines reduces power interruptions dramatically. An effective clearing method like tree removal and herbicide application prevents regrowth that has to be removed over and over.


Process

JMEC is committed to proactively prevent this from happening by supporting a robust vegetation management team of employees and contractors and a plan that is safe and cost effective. JMEC employees and/or contracts International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborists. All herbicides are only applied by a New Mexico Certified Pesticide Applicator. Here is a glimpse of what the process is.

1. JMEC has a Vegetation Management Coordinator and an Assistant that survey wooded areas of JMEC to determine the priority of where the trees need to be cleared first. During the scheduling process landowners are contacted so the type of removal can be discussed. Clearing vegetation can include tree trimming, removal and herbicide application.
2. Once the priority is set it is either scheduled with tree trimming contractors or in-house crews.
3. Vegetation is cleared. If necessary power may be interrupted while the crews are working if it cannot be done safely with the power on.
4. Limbs are chipped and large trunks are blocked. Wood and chips are removed (landowners can request they be left if they want).
5. Herbicide is applied to stumps and saplings of invasive species of trees.
6. Site is reevaluated by and closed if complete or revisited if necessary.



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Herbicides

With invasive trees that grow and/or spread quickly are flagged for herbicide application. Some trees, like the Siberian (Chinese) Elm or Atlantis trees, even when cut to the ground can regrow and cause problems sometimes within months, sometimes if not treated they grow back much worse than before they were cut. Our New Mexico Certified Pesticide Applicator employs low volume backpack spraying equipment that targets only the vegetation and/or stumps to be treated. JMEC is committed to employee methods that are environmentally safe and proven. The two herbicides used are listed below. Safety Data Sheets and “What you need to know” documents are available on our website at <http://www.jemezcoop.org/content/vegetation-management>.

HERBICIDE BRAND NAME	EPA REGISTRATION #	MANUFACTURER
Garlon 4	62719-527	Dow AgroSciences
Tordon RTU	62719-31	Dow AgroSciences
Trycera	5905-580	Helena Chemical Co.

These herbicides are widely used and have undergone rigorous toxicological, environmental and chemical testing and have been approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Conclusion

Your cooperation to keep the power lines clear of all trees helps everyone stay safe, keeps the lights on and electricity costs low. Always be aware of JMEC employees and contractors in your neighborhood. Both JMEC and Contractor trucks will have JMEC logos for easy identification. Any questions or concerns about crews at your home or if you would like wood chips for the Espanola area please contact our Vegetation Management Coordinator, Lenny Ortiz at 505-367-1165, 505-927-8549 or email lenny.ortiz@jemezcoop.org and for the Cuba/Jemez Springs areas Asst. Vegetation Management Coordinator, Emma (Amy) Valdez at 505-901-3344 or email evaldez@jemezcoop.org.