

## CHAPTER 25. SUBSTANTIVE RULES APPLICABLE TO ELECTRIC SERVICE PROVIDERS.

### Subchapter D. RECORDS, REPORTS AND OTHER REQUIRED INFORMATION.

#### §25.96. Vegetation Management.

- (a) **Application.** This section applies to an electric utility's (utility) distribution assets.
- (b) **Definitions.** The following terms when used in this section shall have the following meaning, unless the context indicates otherwise.
- (1) **Distribution assets** -- The utility's facilities operating at less than 60 kilovolts (kV), excluding substations, underground facilities, and service drops, for which the utility needs to perform vegetation maintenance.
  - (2) **Right-of-way (ROW)** -- Land on which electric lines are located and that the utility has the right to access for the purpose of maintaining its distribution system and managing vegetation.
  - (3) **Scheduled vegetation maintenance** -- The anticipated vegetation management activities a utility expects to conduct during a particular budget cycle, including trimming, spraying, and removal activities.
  - (4) **Tree risk management** -- Planning for, assessing, monitoring, and mitigating structurally unsound trees that could threaten a utility's distribution assets.
  - (5) **Unscheduled vegetation maintenance** -- Responsive vegetation maintenance that can include, but is not limited to, customer-requested and utility-requested maintenance.
- (c) **Vegetation management requirements under other provisions.** Compliance with this section fully satisfies the vegetation management planning and reporting requirements of §25.94(c)(2) of this title (relating to Report on Infrastructure Improvement and Maintenance) and §25.95(e)(2) of this title (relating to Electric Utility Infrastructure Storm Hardening).
- (d) **Utility conformance to standards of the industry.** For any mandatory provision of any standard specified in paragraphs (1)-(3) of this subsection to which a utility's vegetation management policies do not conform, the utility shall provide a brief explanation for the deviation in its Vegetation Management Report:
- (1) American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Standard Z133.1, *Arboricultural Operations – Pruning*, or successor standard;
  - (2) ANSI Standard A300 (Part 1) – *Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Management – Standard Practices (Pruning)*; (Part 7) – *Integrated Vegetation Management a. Utility Rights-of-way practices*; and (Part 9) – *Tree Risk Assessment a. Tree Structure Assessment*; or successor standards; and
  - (3) National Electrical Safety Code Section 218, or successor standard.
- (e) **Vegetation Management Plan.** Each utility shall maintain a Vegetation Management Plan (Plan) that describes the utility's objectives, practices, procedures, and work specifications for its distribution assets. A full copy of the Plan shall be provided to the commission or commission staff within ten days of receipt of the request. A utility shall review and update its Plan by December 31 of each year. The Plan shall include, at a minimum, a description of the utility's:
- (1) tree pruning methodology, trimming clearances, and scheduling approach;
  - (2) methods used to mitigate threats posed by vegetation to applicable distribution assets;
  - (3) tree risk management program;
  - (4) participation in continuing education by the utility's internal vegetation management personnel;
  - (5) estimate of the miles of circuits along which vegetation is to be trimmed or method for planning trimming work for the coming year;

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- (6) plan to remediate vegetation-caused issues on feeders which are on the worst vegetation-caused performing feeder list for the preceding calendar year's System Average Interruption Duration Index (SAIDI) and System Average Interruption Frequency Index (SAIFI); and
  - (7) customer education, notification, and outreach practices related to vegetation management.
- (f) **Vegetation Management Report.** A utility shall file with the commission by May 1 of each year a Vegetation Management Report (Report) summarizing its Vegetation Management Plan for the current calendar year and its progress in implementing its Plan for the preceding calendar year. The Report filed May 1, 2013 does not need to contain the information required by paragraph (2) of this subsection. The Report shall include, at a minimum, the following components:
- (1) A Vegetation Management Plan summary including, at a minimum, a summary of the utility's:
    - (A) vegetation maintenance goals and the method the utility employs to measure its progress;
    - (B) trimming clearances and scheduling approach;
    - (C) plan to remediate vegetation-caused issues on feeders that are on the vegetation-caused, worst performing feeder list for the preceding calendar year's SAIDI and SAIFI;
    - (D) tree risk management program;
    - (E) approach to monitoring, preparing for, and responding to adverse environmental conditions such as drought and wildfire danger that may impact its vegetation management policies and practices;
    - (F) total overhead distribution miles in its system, excluding service drops;
    - (G) total number of electric points of delivery;
    - (H) amount of vegetation-related work it plans to accomplish in the current calendar year to achieve its vegetation management goals described in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph; and
    - (I) vegetation management budget, divided into the categories listed in clauses (i)-(iv) of this subparagraph. The utility should, within the confines of its own budgeting practices, assign subcategories and list them under these categories where appropriate. If a utility does not budget amounts under any specific category, the utility shall provide a brief explanation of why it does not do so. The utility shall title the budget with the dates it covers and provide a total for each category or subcategory.
      - (i) scheduled vegetation maintenance;
      - (ii) unscheduled vegetation maintenance;
      - (iii) tree risk management; and
      - (iv) emergency and post-storm activities.
  - (2) An implementation summary for the preceding calendar year including, at a minimum, a description of:
    - (A) whether the utility met its vegetation maintenance goals and how its goals have changed for the coming calendar year based on the results;
    - (B) successes and challenges with the utility's strategy, including obstacles faced, such as property owner interference, and methods employed to overcome them;
    - (C) the progress and obstacles to remediating issues on the vegetation-caused, worst performing feeders list as submitted in the preceding year's Report;
    - (D) the number of continuing education hours logged for the utility's internal vegetation management personnel, if applicable;
    - (E) the amount of vegetation management work the utility accomplished to achieve its vegetation management goals described in paragraph (1)(A) of this subsection;

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- (F) the separate SAIDI and SAIFI scores for vegetation-caused interruptions for each month and as reported for the calendar year in its Service Quality Report filed pursuant to §25.52 of this title (relating to Reliability and Continuity of Service) and §25.81 of this title (relating to Service Quality Reports), at both the feeder and company level;
- (G) the vegetation management budget, including, at a minimum:
  - (i) a single table with columns representing:
    - (I) the budget for each category and subcategory that the utility provided in the preceding year pursuant to paragraph (1)(I) of this subsection, with totals for each category and subcategory;
    - (II) the actual expenditures for each category and subcategory listed pursuant to subclause (I) of this clause, with totals for each category or subcategory;
    - (III) the percentage of actual expenditures over or under the budget for each category or subcategory listed pursuant to subclause (I) of this clause; and
    - (IV) the actual expenditures for the preceding reporting year for each category and subcategory listed pursuant to subclause (I) of this clause, with totals for each category or subcategory;
  - (ii) an explanation of the variation from the preceding year's vegetation management budget where actual expenditures in any category or subcategory fell below 98 percent or increased above 110 percent of the budget for that category;
  - (iii) the total vegetation management expenditures divided by the number of electric points of delivery on the utility's system, excluding service drops;
  - (iv) the total vegetation management expenditures, including expenditures from the storm reserve, divided by the number of customers the utility served; and
  - (v) the vegetation management budget from the utility's last base-rate case.