

# Trouble Paying Your Bill?

## Payment Assistance Options

As the winter heating season comes to a close, Vectren wants to remind customers of the number of billing and payment assistance options that are available to help manage some of the season's highest bills.

### » **Energy Assistance Program (EAP)**

State and federal utility assistance dollars are still available for income-eligible customers. Those that fall below 150% of federal poverty guidelines should visit their local community action agency to sign up for EAP.

### » **Universal Service Program**

Customers who qualify for EAP will be automatically enrolled in the Universal Service Program (USP). The USP will reduce natural gas bills of eligible low-income customers by 15 to 32% depending on the family's income.

### » **Payment Arrangement**

Customers who are having difficulty paying bills in full can request a payment arrangement to fulfill the obligation in smaller increments over a set period of time.

### » **Payment Extension**

Customers can request a one-time extension of the due date on their current monthly bill.

### » **Budget Bill**

We realize that seasonal highs and lows in energy usage can significantly impact your monthly household budget. Under this billing plan, a customer's estimated annual energy charges are spread out in equal monthly payments to remove the uncertainty.

To learn more about these programs, please visit [www.vectren.com](http://www.vectren.com) or call 1-800-227-1376.

## **Customer Service**

Phone: 1-800-227-1376 • Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. CST

## **Conservation Connection**

Phone: 1-866-240-8476 • Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. CST

30738-1-0033

# Planting and maintaining your trees



VCS 3/11

# Vectren's tree-trimming practices

To protect our power lines, prevent outages and ultimately keep you safe, we must trim and maintain the foliage in and around these lines. Our goal is to increase reliability of service by properly pruning and maintaining trees with healthy root systems, which ultimately leads to less decay and structural weakness and fewer downed lines during storms.



This work is typically done on a five-year cycle. Vectren has permission to trim trees in the communities it serves through franchise and easement agreements. However, we always make it a point to give proper notification to property owners about our tree trimming activities before the process begins.

More importantly, our tree trimming crews follow approved trimming standards that were established by the Arbor Day Foundation and are designed to preserve the health of the trees. Read more about Vectren's tree trimming standards through the Tree Line USA program at [www.arborday.org/treelineusa](http://www.arborday.org/treelineusa). To avoid serious injury, do not attempt to remove limbs or trim trees that are on or near power lines. To report a tree problem near your home or business, please contact us at [www.vectren.com](http://www.vectren.com) via the Public Safety tab or call 1-800-227-1376.

## Right tree, right place

Please give careful consideration to your tree's growth characteristics to avoid future problems with nearby power lines by making sure you plant the right tree in the right place. And, don't forget to call before you dig by calling 811 to have underground utility lines marked to avoid striking them.

### Plant trees or shrubs at these minimum distances from electric distribution lines:

- 10 feet for trees or shrubs maturing to 15 feet
- 20 feet for trees maturing to 25 feet
- 30 feet for trees maturing to 35 feet

Tree species that should never be planted within 50 feet of power lines include Maple, Oak, Ash, Sycamore and White Pine. Click on the Public Safety tab at [www.vectren.com](http://www.vectren.com) or visit [www.arborday.org/trees](http://www.arborday.org/trees) to learn more about planting the right tree in the right place.

## Proper pruning techniques for quality tree care

When pruning your trees, follow these tips to ensure that your trees remain healthy:

- **Cut as close as possible to the branch collar:** A ring, or "doughnut," of living tissue will form around a correct cut after one growing season.
- **Do not leave stubs:** they are entry courts for rot-causing fungi.
- **Make cuts at nodes, which are the place where a branch meets another branch or the trunk.** Making cuts between nodes leads to excessive sprouting, cracks and rot.

## Properly placed trees can cut energy costs

**Cooling:** Cooling costs can be cut by up to 30% if half of the roof is shaded, and shading the air conditioner will also improve its efficiency by up to 10%.

### When planting trees and shrubs around your home:

- Consider the seasonal sun angles when planting for sun shade. Buildings with large south or west exposures need shade mid to late afternoon.
- Medium to large trees provide excellent cooling because they shade both home and yard.
- Plant deciduous trees to the southeast and southwest of the home for shade. Choose and place trees to cast the maximum amount of summer shade and the minimum of winter shade. Make sure the trees are placed far enough away from the house as to not interfere with the structure as the trees mature.
- Shrubs and small trees can be planted to shade air conditioners. However, be careful not to plant too close to the unit as to block airflow. Keep units free of leaves and needles.

**Heating:** Properly placed trees and shrubs can help reduce heating costs by blocking winter winds. Deciduous trees planted to cool a home will lose their leaves to allow the radiation of the sun to help heat the structure.

Conserve energy by planting a combination of evergreen trees and shrubs on the side of your home that blocks the coldest of winter winds. Choose plants whose branches will grow low to the ground.