

Frequently Asked Questions - Pipeline Right-of-Way Maintenance

City of Bryan: Camelot Park

Pipelines are among the safest and most efficient means of transporting natural gas and petroleum products, according to National Transportation Safety Board statistics. In the United States alone, there are over 300,000 miles of natural gas transmission pipelines in use every day. These transmission pipelines are larger than distribution lines, yet they are essential to delivering energy to your home.

How would you know where a pipeline is?

Pipelines are generally underground, where they are more protected from the elements and minimize interference with uses of surface property. Pipeline rights-of-way are clearly identified by pipeline markers along routes that identify the approximate location of the pipeline. Each pipeline marker contains information that identifies the company that operates the pipeline, the product transported, and a phone number that should be called in the event of an emergency. The U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of Pipeline Safety has developed the National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS) to provide information about gas transmission and liquid transmission operators and their pipelines. The NPMS web site is searchable by zip code, or by county and state, and can display a county map that is printable. Please go to www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov/ for more information.

What is a right-of-way and why is it important?

Pipeline companies work diligently to establish written agreements, or easements, with land owners that define the company's rights for the construction, operation and maintenance of pipelines that cross private property. Rights-of way are often recognizable as corridors that are clear of buildings, structures and trees. Usually, pipeline markers are located within a right-of-way but sometimes they are stolen, knocked down or hidden by growth within the right-of-way. Rights-of-ways are clearly defined on plats with local governments and County Clerk's offices also have records of easements which are public record. For the areas of right-of way that our maintenance project will address, the recorded plats identify the location of the easements as well as specific provisions that permit this type of clearing. These easements remain binding on new property owners, even if property is sold or conveyed from the original landowner. Our easements are also on file with the County Clerk.

Why do you need to clear trees from the pipeline right-of-way?

Over time, tree growth inhibits Atmos' ability to provide right-of-way surveillance and perform routine maintenance in accordance with required federal/state inspections. In order to perform these critical activities, pipeline maintenance personnel must be able to easily and safely access the pipeline right-of-way, as well as areas on either side of the pipeline. Keeping trees, shrubs, buildings, fences structure and other encroachments well away from the pipelines promotes maintenance of pipeline integrity and safety. In addition, the root systems of many trees and large shrubs can grow against or around pipelines damaging the coating and even denting the pipeline. That type of underground damage can result in leaks and potential harm to the public. To avoid such damage, Atmos needs to remove trees from the right-of-way.

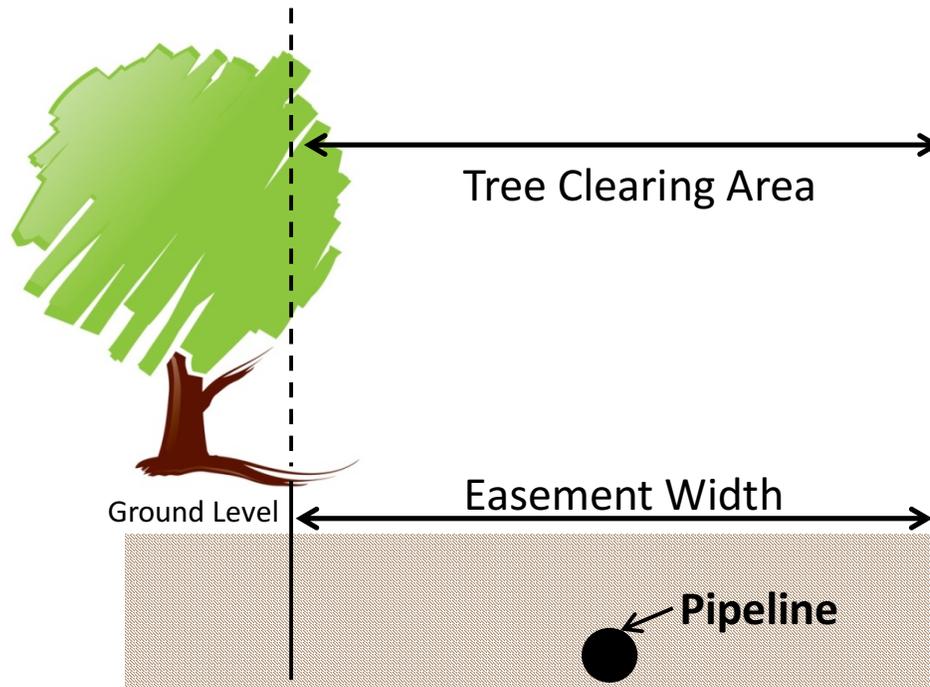


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How much will be cleared?

Generally, the width of the easement will be cleared. The width can vary depending on the terms of the easement document. Additionally, some trees outside of the right-of-way may require trimming of branches overhanging the right-of-way.



What will become of the tree refuse created by this maintenance?

The byproducts of this reclamation will be transported off-site. Stumps are typically mechanically ground to be level with, or just beneath, the surrounding soil.

How long will this project take?

Once work commences, Atmos Energy anticipates completion of the work will take approximately three to five business days, weather permitting.

Are there other issues about the pipeline right-of-way that I should be aware of?

Keeping trees, shrubs, and buildings off of the right-of-way are essential for effective monitoring. Even temporary buildings can inhibit inspection of the pipeline.