

FACTS ABOUT TRANSMISSION LINE CONSTRUCTION

Transmission Line Construction

Construction activities for a new transmission line include:

- Conducting field investigations
- Surveying
- Preparing the right-of-way
- Installing the poles or towers
- Stringing the conductor wires

Field investigations and surveying can occur before approvals are granted by the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC). The other activities occur only after the AUC has issued its approvals.

Before Construction Begins

ATCO Electric will contact landowners along the route to inform them of our schedule and negotiate the necessary agreements.

Preparing the right-of-way will require the removal of trees from the right-of-way and may also require selective clearing of tall trees near the right-of-way. In forested areas the actual width of the right-of-way will depend on the type of transmission structure and the height of the trees nearby.

In some cases, ATCO Electric will have to temporarily remove a fence or gate, or relocate structures such as granaries. During the construction period, temporary fences will be built if it is necessary to keep livestock contained. We may have to construct temporary roads *on* the right-of-way or, depending on the circumstances, for access *to* the right-of-way. In cases where travel along the right-of-way is not possible, we will need to create a permanent trail for maintenance access.

Foundations and Structures

Tower foundations may be a type of steel pile or augured holes filled with reinforced concrete. Digging larger holes for grillage-type anchors may be necessary if the ground is extremely hard or rocky. The structures are assembled next to the foundations then raised and set into place. In the final stage of construction, trailers carrying large reels of wire are brought in and the wire is strung onto the towers or poles.

Temporary Access and Workspace

Some construction operations require a temporary workspace outside the right-of-way. An example is stringing the wire onto the towers where the line changes direction by more than 15 degrees. Where temporary work space or an access trail off the right-of-way is needed, the affected landowner is consulted with respect to our proposal and compensated for these requirements separately from the compensation provided for the permanent right-of-way.

Restoring the Right-of-Way

In the areas where construction takes place, soil that can reasonably withstand compaction will be loosened mechanically following completion of construction. Where the soil is not suitable for compaction, measures will be taken to protect the surface of the working area.

All construction debris is removed from the right-of-way either before our contractors leave the area, or in the case of winter construction, as soon as ground conditions permit. All fences removed or relocated will be restored to the condition they were in before construction began. Brushing debris (cleared trees and bushes) is normally burned on site.

When clearing treed areas, we do not grub roots or break up new ground. We will seed the right-of-way to compatible grasses at the request of a landowner. ATCO Electric makes every effort to restore the work site, as near as is practical, to its original condition.

Maintenance of the Right-of-Way

Access rights to construct the line and for ongoing maintenance are granted in the power line easement agreement.

On agricultural land, where the right-of-way is usually returned to cultivation or grazing by the landowner, ATCO Electric's maintenance activities are usually limited to inspections and emergency repairs on the line.

On land that is not cultivated or grazed, vegetation needs to be controlled to ensure safe operation of the line. ATCO Electric tries to keep the right-of-way covered with grass or other low-growing plants, to allow access while protecting the soil. Vegetation is controlled mechanically by trimming, slashing or mowing, or chemically, by spraying herbicides.

Continued on page 2

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Construction and Farming

ATCO Electric makes every effort to follow quarter section lines and other property boundaries in order to minimize the impact on farming operations. Sometimes it is necessary to move onto the cultivated area in order to avoid well sites or pipelines or at the landowner's request. In these cases, we try to position transmission structures where they will have the least impact on farming operations.

Depending on the time of year construction takes place, there may be temporary interference with farm activity. ATCO Electric will make every reasonable effort to coordinate our activities with farming operations to minimize inconveniences.

Environmental Considerations

Clearing, construction, reclamation and subsequent activities are carried out in accordance with Alberta Environment's Environmental Protection Guidelines for Electric Transmission Lines (C&R/IL/95-2). Our equipment cleaning practices have been generally adopted from the Government of Alberta's Clubroot Management Plan. The specific cleaning practice used at any particular location depends on a joint assessment of local factors with the landowner.

Activities must also follow the terms and conditions of right-of-way agreements, Crown permits and easements, and comply with all applicable laws, regulations and good utility practices. Measures to be taken to address environmental concerns are identified through environmental protection planning and in consultation with landowners and agencies.

Construction Noise

Construction noise is generally limited to the initial construction period and includes traffic noise and construction activity of vehicles and heavy equipment. The long-term operation of the facility only requires occasional traffic and activity for inspection and maintenance. Under AUC Rule 012 all construction activities must take place between 7:00am and 10:00pm. ATCO Electric will advise all nearby residents of significant noise-causing activities and will schedule these events to reduce disruption.



Contact Us

Your comments and concerns are important to us.
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