



SCE	Legal, Regulatory, and Compliance	Transmission & Distribution Utility Vegetation Management Program	Methodology	Doc. No.	UVM-18	 SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA <b>EDISON</b> Energy for What's Ahead <sup>SM</sup>
				Version	1	
Effective Date		12/6/21				
Supersedes		Version 0				
<b>Assessment and Removal of Dead and Dying Trees</b>						

# UVM-18


## Utility Vegetation Management

### Assessment and Removal of Dead and Dying Trees

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose

To identify, document, and mitigate dead, dying and diseased trees affected by drought and insect infestation that are located within the High Fire Risk Area (HFRA), Utility Strike Zone (USZ), and are expected to pose a risk to electric facilities.

This document meets and/or exceeds the requirements established by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Drought Resolution ESRB-4, dated June 12, 2014.

### 1.2 Objectives

Due to climate change effects, drought and bark beetle infestation, California is facing an epidemic of dead and dying trees. As a result of the drought emergency, SCE established the Drought Relief Initiative (DRI) as a separate and distinct program from SCE's ongoing vegetation management activities. All DRI activities occur within HFRA.

DRI inspections are conducted as needed in Tier 2 and Tier 3 HFRA for tree mortality to identify and remove dead, dying, or diseased trees affected by drought conditions. Identified dead, dying, or diseased trees are removed in accordance with vegetation management program guidelines.


### 1.3 Additional Considerations

SCE manages hundreds of thousands of trees within and along easements and rights-of-ways (ROW). Given the magnitude, SCE cannot continuously assess every tree for possible defects. Even under the best circumstances and with the highest standard of care, tree failure cannot be predicted with 100% accuracy. SCE is unable to reasonably foresee all tree failures, all the time. However, by exercising good professional judgment and using a systematic approach to patrols, it is possible to significantly reduce the risk of tree failures that can damage electric facilities.

It is not possible to accurately identify or predict all trees that will fail, particularly during Force Majeure Events<sup>1</sup>. These events could include unforeseeable weather events, or failures related to conditions that cannot be observed such as those related to root systems or the inner structure of the tree.

Additionally, SCE may be hindered from reducing potential tree risks by property owner opposition and limited access to private property.

<sup>1</sup> Circumstances that are beyond a utility's control, including natural disasters such as earthquakes, fires, tornados, hurricanes, landslides, wind shear, fresh gale, major storms, ice storms, and floods; human or animal activity such as logging, animal severing tree, vehicle contact with tree, or installation, removal, or digging of vegetation

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Many trees that pose a potential risk to electric facilities are owned by others and SCE may not have rights to enter properties to conduct assessments and perform mitigation tasks.

## 2 Applicability

This document is applicable to Transmission and Distribution operating units impacted by Energy Regulatory Compliance Program (ERCP) Compliance Requirements related to Vegetation Management.

## 3 Definitions

Refer to the NERC Glossary of Terms, the E&C Shared Services Glossary of Terms (ECSS-02), and UVM Program Glossary of Terms (UVM-16) for any capitalized terms used in this document.

## 4 Document Detail

### 4.1 Patrol Scope and Approval

Patrols are performed in applicable areas within SCE's Tier 2 and Tier 3 HFRA. Applicable areas are determined based on California's Tree Mortality Task Force, which updates maps annually to show High Hazard Zones and Hazard Severity Zones. All Zones are included in patrol scope.

Patrol frequency varies, with the patrol schedule being set prior to the start of each year. Patrols are performed at least annually, frequently 2-3 times/year, and in some cases may be performed as frequently as quarterly. The frequency is based on the Zone designation and past findings in each area, such as tree density, trending tree mortality, etc.


The annual work plan should be approved by the Strategy Senior Manager and Principal Manager in 4Q prior to the work plan year. Subsequent additions/deletions of scope-circuits should be annotated in a revised plan and approved by the Strategy Senior Manager and Principal Manager. The approved work plan and subsequent revision shall be maintained in the VM SharePoint site.

### 4.2 Assessment Detail / Documentation

Assessors typically focus their assessments on trees that have the potential to strike SCE Transmission or Distribution facilities, including but not be limited to: primary conductors and other structures.

The assessment performed is a Level 1: Limited Visual Assessment, in accordance with ANSI A300 (Part 9). This is accomplished by conducting an assessment from one side of the tree (side nearest the electric facilities) and can be ground-based, vehicle-based, or aerial-based (e.g., fixed-wing, helicopter, drone, LiDAR), as appropriate for the site conditions, type of infrastructure, and tree population being considered. A Level 1 assessment focuses on identifying obvious tree defects (i.e. dead branches, leaning) that are observable from the side of the tree nearest the electric facilities.



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Only trees with a canopy decline of 75% or greater from the top of the tree down, and/or are significantly infected with bark beetles or other invasive insects (or evidence of damage from prior infestation) will be identified for removal as being determined to die within 1 year. Trees identified for removal will be documented:

- By species type (sub-species not required)
- In the current work management system
- Recorded as an individual tree point

Trees identified for removal shall have the diameter at breast height (DBH) recorded at a distance of 4.5 feet above ground level.

- DBH should be recorded with an accuracy of +/- 2 inches, when possible
- Trees with a DBH of less than 4.5" DBH shall be referred to Vegetation Management's routine compliance team for subsequent removal and appropriate invoicing

If the tree is a codominant (multi-trunk tree), and the split is between the ground level and head, identify as two trees.

Height of the tree should be recorded with an accuracy of +/- 5 feet, when possible.

#### **4.3 Assessor Qualifications**


Assessments for DRI are performed by appropriately trained and qualified arborists. All DRI removals prescribed for removal on US Forestry Service (USFS) and National Parks land shall either be prescribed by an ISA Certified Arborist, or reviewed by an ISA Certified Arborist before submission.

#### **4.4 Assessor Responsibilities**

Trees identified for removal shall be appropriately field marked for removal. Field marking requirements are communicated to the contractor accordingly.

Identified Priority 1 conditions posing an immediate threat to SCE facilities are managed in accordance with UVM-08, "Managing Vegetation Threats," and require the individual identifying the threat to stay onsite until the threat is mitigated, or they are relieved by an SCE representative, or designee.

Customer refusals to perform the work are reported to the DRI Program manager, or directly to the UVM Event Expeditor, for processing in accordance with UVM-14, Refusal Management.

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#### 4.5 Mitigation Actions

Tree removal is the only mitigation action for DRI

#### 4.6 Removal Timeliness

DRI trees identified for removal are typically removed within 180 days of identification contingent upon appropriate access and authorization to perform the work.

Although 180 days is the target removal target, SCE Vegetation Management commits to a yearly goal for percentage removal.


### 5 Approvals

Program Manager	Signature	Date
[NAME REMOVED], Principal Manager	[NAME REMOVED]	12/2/21

### 6 Revision History

Revision Number	Date	Description of Revision	By	Next Review Date
0	10/15/20	Initial release for UVM Program	[NAME REMOVED]	10/15/21
1	12/6/21	Added Work Plan approval information	[NAME REMOVED]	12/6/22

### 7 References

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### External References

California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Drought Resolution ESRB-4, dated June 12, 2014.

### Internal References

ECSS-01, E&C Shared Services Glossary of Terms

UVM-08, Vegetation Threats

UVM-14, Manage Refusal Events

UVM-16, UVM Program Glossary of Terms

## 8 Distribution and Data Retention

The official version of the document shall be stored in the T&D Vegetation Management UVM Program SharePoint Document Library while in effect and retained for at least seven (7) years thereafter.

The approved work plan and subsequent revision shall be maintained in the VM SharePoint site.

### Distribution list:

- T&D VM Managers
- E&C Program Management Office
- Impacted OU Touchpoints

## 9 Key Contacts

UVM Senior Manager, Operations: [NAME AND PHONE NUMBER REMOVED]

UVM Senior Manager, Compliance: [NAME AND PHONE NUMBER REMOVED]

UVM Senior Manager, Strategic Planning: [NAME AND PHONE NUMBER REMOVED]