

From: [Nancy Showalter](#)
To: [Poon, DeAnna](#)
Subject: Comments Nancy Showalter
Date: Thursday, June 14, 2012 3:59:00 PM
Attachments: [Final document for MK area ny me.doc](#)

My final comments Thank you

To: To All Commissioners, Judge Poon, General Counsel Doug Webber

From: Nancy Showalter
4619 N. Pennsylvania Street
Indianapolis IN 46205

Re: Cause 43663, Tree Trimming Policies and Practices

My background

I have been involved with this “tree” issue for almost 11 years now dating back to the summer of 2001 when IPL/AES was trimming (?) the trees along North Pennsylvania Street in Meridian-Kessler. The new ownership of IPL and the new trimming practices brought forth a deluge of rage and concern from the owners of homes in the area who cherished their beautiful trees. Meetings were held with IPL and Wright Tree Company at the police station on North College in trying to resolve differences of opinions about the trimming issues. The Meridian-Kessler Neighborhood Associations All- Neighborhood meeting in the spring of 2002 featured “trees” with IPL and AES staff speaking on the issues at hand. IPL followed-up in forming a Community Advisory Council (I was on this for about 10 years) to better connect with the consumer in communication and trees were a major topic!

Specific Needs Pertaining to Urban, Residential Neighborhoods

Property Owner: Rule 9, Sec 2, 4

It is primary that this rule changes the wording from *occupant* to owner in all places in the document. In the city, primarily, there are many persons who may occupy a house/property at any given time: babysitter, cleaning staff, yard crew, mother-in-law, renters, out-of-town guests. It is unconscionable to think any of these people would have the authority to give permission to IPL to cut/trim my beautiful tree in my front yard, planted in memory of my father in 1981. This can never happen. ALL communication MUST be made with the PROPERTY OWNER whose information is easily obtain through the appropriate County Accessor’s Office and property tax records.

Trimming Distances/Cutting Cycles/On-site Arborist

Currently the trees are trimmed “by whim” by the trimming crews, many who don’t know one species of tree from another even though IPL will tell you “they are educated” about the trees. This does not happen in actuality when it comes to what happens on ones property when there is a chain saw in hand! This needs to STOP. There need to be penalties or specific guidelines shared with the public (prior to trimming) on what the trimming practices are per species. Per [Sec 7 \(a\)](#) added by the Tree Alliance submitted document, these trim allowances should be discussed before trimming begins.

170 IAC 4-9-7 Vegetation management standards

Authority: IC 8-1-1-3; IC 8-1-2-4; IC 8-1.5-3-8

Affected: IC 8-1-2

Sec.7 (a) On site utility management prior to trimming, during trimming, and following trimming:

Prior to trimming:

The utility arborist shall inspect each property prior to trimming and shall instruct the English speaking supervisor of the tree trimming crew assigned to that property which tree is to be trimmed, how and where on the tree the trimming shall occur . When requested by the property owner this information shall be provided to the property owner and if he or she objects to the planned trimming the dispute provisions of the UVM rules shall apply. A written record of the pre-trimming instructions shall be created and compared to completed work and shall be available for audit inspections

During Trimming:

The English speaking supervisor shall at all times remain on site during trimming to ensure his instructions as to which tree is to be trimmed, how and where are closely followed. This English speaking supervisor shall hold a pre-trimming meeting with his crew to relay the arborist instructions. A set of hand signals accompanied by a whistle to assist the on site supervisor on the ground shall be developed to ensure crews in the trees can receive instructions while working. Signals such as stop, wrong tree limb, storm warning, line is hot or dead, etc. During trimming if the property owner has an objection the supervisor shall instruct his crew to stop. At this point the rules on disputes procedures shall commence. Every effort to work out disputes then shall made by the on site English speaking supervisor.

Uniform cutting cycles in the city/urban areas should be communicated to the home owners and neighborhood associations without any problems. In my personal communications with IPL I was informed that Marion County is basically trimmed like eating corn-on-the-cob, starting from top to bottom, going from left to right and back to the left then back to the right when coming to the county lines (or end or the trim area). When reaching the bottom of the county then basically returning to the top and start over! So, a printed, 3 year trim cycle can be establish and communicated to the entire county, on the IPL website and distributed to neighborhood associations well in advance of further mailings, pamphlets or door hangers and the trim crews entering the streets.

170 IAC 4-9-7 Vegetation management standards

Authority: IC 8-1-1-3; IC 8-1-2-4; IC 8-1.5-3-8

Affected: IC 8-1-2

Sec.7 © Line clearances should take into consideration the following: (Corrected)

(1) The utility's chosen cutting cycle which is govern by the following standards:

- a. In urban areas the cutting cycle shall be 3 years**
- b. In rural areas the cutting cycle shall be from 5-6 years. However, this extended cutting cycle can not be used in rural areas nor in smaller rural towns or cities or in areas where there is a cluster of rural homes spaced reasonably close**

together. In such cases the urban standard shall apply to prevent excessive trimming around these homes.

- (2) characteristics of the locality including the topography of the land
- (3) electrical facility; and
- (4) health and condition of the tree including the height of the tree and degree of leaning
- (5) *Minimum vegetation clearance distances as outlined in section 2, #9 (Federal Standards FAC-003-002)*

25% Canopy

No more than 25% canopy should ever be trimmed in any cutting cycle. If more trim is needed then the following must take place:

(B) Inform the customer that it will need to make non-ANSI standards cuts in order to provide clearance. If these non-standards cuts are unacceptable to the property owner the dispute provisions and tree replacement provisions of the IURC's UVM rules shall commence

Notification to Neighborhood Associations

I think it has been evident in the testimonies that the area neighborhood associations have been very involved in this tree trimming issue. Therefore, it should follow that all associations should be notified the same as home owners are notified. More than 60 days are needed for new line installment or relocation of lines. One year to 6 months at least. (Sec. 5)

Uniform Educational Pamphlet

An information pamphlet must be mailed or attached with the door hanger giving detailed information to the property owner about trees and the trimming process. This is a MUST in the entire trimming process for all involved as the lack of information on behalf of the property owner leaves the utility in total control at all times. Many new property owners are totally unaware of the process and are left a victim without a chance of getting to learn about the process and be educated. How unfair! [Sec. 4 (c)]

Door Hanger

Must have more detailed information about what is happening on the property. The current hanger is extremely vague and ambiguous and lacks details.