

Aerial Topping Saw - Fact Sheet

- FirstEnergy has a comprehensive vegetation management program designed to maintain its transmission rights-of-way (ROW)
 - As part of this program all safety precautions are utilized by FirstEnergy employees and vegetation management contractors
- One of the tools available are helicopters equipped with aerial tree topping saws for topping, trimming or removing dead, diseased, leaning or dying trees along the rights-of-way
 - The helicopter has a saw consisting of a single 47-inch blade powered by its own auxiliary engine, suspended on a vertical boom beneath it
 - The topping saw cuts rapidly and cleanly. Tree tops/limbs are neatly cut and fall straight down, assisted by the air blasts from the rotors of the helicopter
 - Aerial saws are in accordance with ANSI A300 tree pruning standards
- The aerial topping saw is not a replacement for conventional tree-trimming methods, but it is very effective on hard-to-reach transmission and sub-transmission lines
 - The aerial topping saw is not used to trim trees in residential areas unless safety buffers are utilized
- FirstEnergy has contracted with Rotor Blade, Inc to perform the aerial topping saw work. Rotor Blade, Inc has been performing helicopter ROW trimming and maintenance since 2008

Pictures of Aerial Topping Saw







What are the benefits of using the aerial topping saw?

- Effective and productive in the removal of dead, leaning, diseased or dying trees and maximizes safety by eliminating tree crew exposure to climbing, rigging and roping hazard trees
- Eliminates the risk of injury to workers using bucket trucks or climbing trees near energized lines.
- Best tool to use in environmentally sensitive areas, remote areas or places inaccessible to a vehicle – *Leaves no footprint*
- Aids in efficiently removing trees identified as a reliability threat to transmission facilities during annual inspections. Protects private land and roads from damage by heavy equipment making repeated trips during the course of the work schedule
- Unlike traditional methods, aerial trimming can reach the top of the tree, without being limited by the reach of a ground vehicle
- Since the accidental introduction of the Emerald Ash Borer, millions of Ash trees have been affected and now pose a threat to the reliability of transmission lines. The aerial topping saw is an effective tool in the removal of these trees without exposing tree workers to dangerous conditions.

Will you notify customers prior to the work beginning?

- FirstEnergy representatives will notify affected property owners prior to any work being done via door hangers, letters, newspaper advertisement or personal contact.

How dangerous is the operation of the saw?

- The operation is monitored and certified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). This certification, as well as the required insurance coverage, is earned only through safe operation of the power saw. The company has been safely using aerial tree-trimming since 2008.

What do you do with the limbs from the trees?

- Brush that has fallen onto access roads, maintained yards, agricultural fields or in streams during the aerial trimming operation will be moved to adjacent wooded areas by a ground crew shortly after the trimming is performed. The ground crew also will identify and remove individual dead trees found along the ROW that potentially threaten the transmission line.

Safety tips

- Observers should stay a safe distance away from the equipment
- Customers should never trim trees near power lines themselves
- FirstEnergy uses only qualified line clearance certified tree workers