



Herbicide Application – Frequently Asked Questions

Does VEC use herbicides to keep vegetation from interfering with power lines?

Yes, in limited locations and under strict regulatory guidelines. All applications are made under conditions set forth in a permit granted by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture and reviewed by the Vermont Pesticide Advisory Council (VPAC). All products used are federally registered and labeled for specific uses by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and are applied by licensed applicators according to product label directions. On-site use inspections are conducted annually by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture.

Why does VEC use herbicides?

The targeted use of herbicides is part of an overall strategy – one that also includes hand-cutting and mowing – to help control vegetation in VEC rights-of-way in order to minimize outages and more quickly and safely restore outages when they do occur. Use of herbicides is a cost-effective way to control certain types of vegetation in selected areas. The overarching goal is to promote low, slow growing species that are compatible with power lines and discourage tall, fast growing species that are incompatible.

When does VEC apply herbicides?

VEC's applications of herbicides generally take place from June through September each year.

How are the herbicides applied?

Workers who are licensed to apply the herbicides walk the rights-of-way with hand operated back-pack sprayers and apply the product to the leaves of small trees and brush. Herbicides are applied only by manual methods that target individual plants or compact clusters of plants. Aerial or wide-area spraying is not done. Herbicide applications specifically target fast growing tree species which are incompatible with the electric facilities. Grass, flowers, vegetables and low growing shrubs are compatible with the power lines and are not targeted during herbicide applications.

Will VEC be applying herbicides near my water supply? Herbicide applications do not take place within 100 feet of known private water supplies or 200 feet of public water supplies. Please note: You are responsible for making your local utility aware of the location of any potentially affected water supply and of any other environmentally sensitive area where herbicide applications should be avoided. (See contact information below)

How does VEC notify members of a planned herbicide application?

Every January/February VEC publishes an annual announcement/coupon in our quarterly newsletter, Co-op Life, explaining the rights of VEC members relative to herbicide applications. If you reside on or own property within 1,000 feet of an electric utility right of way, you may sign up to be notified of any pending herbicide applications. Workers applying herbicide also either place phone calls or go door-to-door to speak with and/or leave information for residents in advance of the planned applications. Finally, every spring VEC runs announcements in newspapers and on radio stations in the counties where herbicide applications are planned.

What should I do if I want to be notified of an application in my area?

You should return the coupon found in the Winter Issue of Co-op Life (or download it [here](#)) and VEC will send you a notification letter at least 30 days prior to the date that herbicide applications will begin for the season to let you know about any pending application near your property. Then, as the date of application approaches, the workers who will apply the herbicide will either call on the phone or go door-to-door to speak with or leave information for residents who have asked to be notified. You can also be placed on the notification mailing list by contacting VEC at the email address below.

What if I'm not home when the workers come through my area to conduct notifications?

When an herbicide application is planned in your area and the applicators place calls or go door-to-door, they will leave a message or a notification hang-tag with their contact information on it, if you are not home. If you have a water supply within 100 feet of the right-of-way or have any other questions or concerns, be sure to contact them within 15 days. If 15 days have passed and they have not heard from you, the application will take place as planned, without any further notice.

What happens if I do not want herbicides used on my property?

After receiving all available information regarding VEC's herbicide applications, you may request that herbicides not be used on your property. VEC will honor all such requests upon notification from the landowner.

I let VEC know some time ago that I don't want herbicides applied on my property. Do I have to notify VEC again?

If you have previously let VEC know that you do not want herbicides applied to a right-of-way on your property, we will not apply herbicides in that area. Nonetheless, we suggest that landowners contact us to update information/requests approximately every 5 years. While the state allows utilities to charge a fee to those people who request pesticides not be used, VEC does not charge any fee.

I told VEC I did not want herbicides used on my property. Why did I still receive a letter saying they are applying herbicides in my area?

VEC tracks all locations where members have any concerns with the use of herbicides and follows the same process for all. So, whether you have requested advanced written notification or you have requested that herbicides not be used at all, you will receive a letter at least 30 days prior to the date that herbicide applications will begin for the season to let you know about a pending application in your area. If you have requested that herbicides not be used on your property and an application is planned for a property adjacent to yours, as the date of application approaches, you will also be contacted by the workers who are applying herbicide so they can identify your property boundaries and water supply.

What are the names of the herbicides VEC uses?

VEC uses a range of different herbicides depending on the year, the location and other conditions. If you have questions about specific herbicides please contact Sara Packer (contact information below.)

Are the herbicides that VEC uses safe?

The EPA approves these products for use only after determining they will not adversely affect people, animals or the environment when applied correctly.

For more information about VEC's Vegetation Management Program or to let VEC know of any concerns, contact VEC Vegetation Management Program Manager Sara Packer at spacker@vermontelectric.coop.

For more information about herbicide regulation, please contact Agrichemical Management Section Chief at the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets Cary Giguere at Cary.Giguere@vermont.gov.