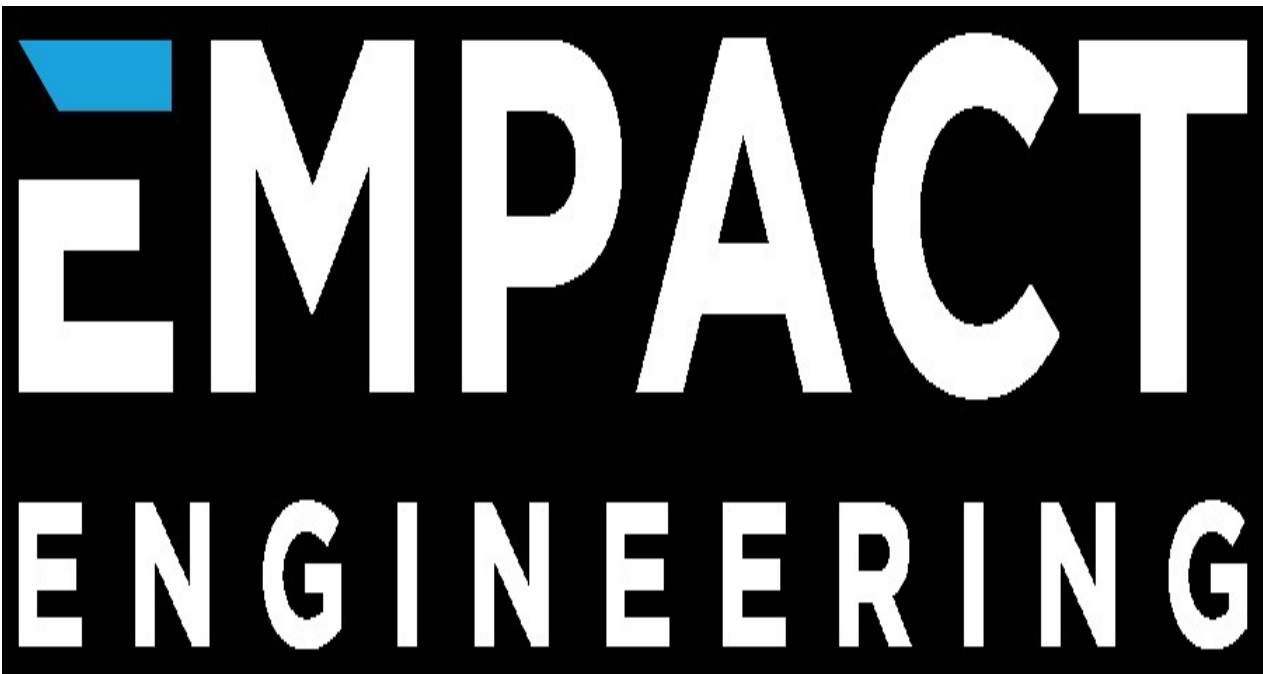




Addressing Rising Costs in Utility Vegetation Management

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As power utilities face mounting pressure to maintain overhead power lines while adhering to static maintenance budgets, traditional approaches to clearing growth are receiving increased scrutiny. It is estimated that the power sector spends between six and eight billion dollars annually on maintenance to clear vegetation from overhead lines. Crews typically must manually survey and identify areas that need pruning, trimming, and removal. This process requires significant time and financial resources while often relying on subjective visual assessments in the field. Seeking a more data-driven alternative, EMPACT Engineering provides a software framework called the EMPACT Vegetation Insights solution to help power providers plan, implement, and track their utility vegetation management activities.

Historically, most power providers have kept their distribution feeders on fixed trim cycles. Crews deploy on a set schedule to clear branches and monitor right-of-way zones regardless of the specific micro-environment of a given area. This routine approach means resources are sometimes spent clearing areas that do not immediately threaten power lines, while faster-growing areas might become a risk before the next scheduled cycle. The cost of maintaining these clearances continues to rise across the industry, forcing grid operators to seek methods that direct their crews and equipment only to locations where work is strictly necessary. The

current landscape has increased interest in using objective, predictive models based on actual, measurable environmental data.

Addressing this industry-wide shift, the EMPACT Vegetation Insights platform applies a highly structured, analytical framework to the day-to-day oversight of right-of-way zones. The system aggregates relevant environmental variables and grid data, allowing providers to supplement manual field surveys and generic cycle times. By monitoring specific micro-environments along distribution feeders, operators can dispatch their maintenance crews based on current risk factors rather than on calendar dates. When grid operators apply this level of tracking to their networks, they can direct their limited budgets toward areas that pose the most immediate risks to power delivery. This shift from calendar-based to condition-based maintenance gives operators a clearer picture of their network environment and helps support more informed maintenance decisions.

The transition toward more data-supported utility vegetation management reflects a broader trend within the energy sector toward digitized operations. As companies face higher operational expenses and stricter regulatory oversight regarding grid reliability, having clear data on power line clearance becomes increasingly important. Relying on paper records, subjective crew assessments, and static budgets makes it difficult for administrators to optimize their spending. Moving to a fully digital tracking environment provides a transparent, centralized historical record of all clearance activities throughout the year, which can support future planning and budget allocation. EMPACT Engineering built its platform specifically to bridge the gap between field observations and administrative planning, providing data that may be used to evaluate how vegetation clearance efforts relate to grid maintenance priorities.

EMPACT Engineering is an engineering and consulting firm that provides technical software solutions and strategic planning for the power and utility sector. The organization specializes in creating data-driven frameworks that help utility operators manage their infrastructure, optimize maintenance budgets, and improve long-term grid reliability. Through specific applications such as the EMPACT Vegetation Insights solution, EMPACT Engineering provides tools that support the use of field observations and analytical data in maintenance planning. Operating across multiple regions, the firm partners with local and regional power providers to implement customized tracking and planning tools. For more information, visit <https://empactengineering.com/>.

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