



What happens if a something is located on an easement?

PWC is not responsible for any damages to a structure that is located within our easement. We can require a structure or other obstruction to be removed at the expense of the owner.

Who is responsible for the maintenance of easements/rights-of-way?

On developed lots and in residential neighborhoods, the property owner is responsible for maintenance of yard areas within easements or rights-of-way. Where we have major water or sewer trunk lines or electric utility lines crossing wooded or undeveloped areas, these are typically maintained by the utility company. PWC has an ongoing tree-trimming/right-of-way clearing program to protect our lines from damage by nearby trees, limbs or overgrown vegetation and to keep our rights-of-way clear and accessible.

If you have questions about PWC utility easements/rights-of-way, please contact PWC at (910) 223-4115.

Remember, often utility lines are buried within easements and rights-of-way. If you do plan any landscaping within the area, call before you dig.



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Property owners should know that there may be easements and rights-of-way located on your property and if so, there are restrictions associated with them. When purchasing a property, people often assume that the land around your home or business (including front and back yard and driveway) is free and clear of any restrictions. But that's not always the case. If you review the deed, plat, survey or preliminary title report, you may discover that there's an easement or rights-of-way on or through your property.

To determine easements or rights-of-way, Cumberland County land records can be viewed at the Register of Deeds website: www.ccrd.org.

What are utility easements and rights-of-way?

The terms "easement" and "right-of-way" are often used interchangeably, because they both refer to areas of property that utilities have permission to use.

- An easement is a property right (not ownership) for a permitted use that is typically granted by property owners to a utility for the purpose of installing/constructing, operating and maintaining electric, water and/or sewer lines and equipment, as well as gas, telephone, fiber optic and other above or underground lines.
- A right-of-way is a corridor or strip of land owned by someone else (i.e. street or railroad right-of-way) and is adjacent to private property.

What determines where easements and rights-of-way are located?

- Utility easements can be found on any land where permission has been granted by the owner or former owner to cross the property with utility lines.
- Rights-of-way include the areas in and along streets and roadways where utility poles, telephone/cable boxes, water meters, etc. are placed. Yard areas between the utility equipment and the street is often within a right-of-way, and the property owner is responsible for keeping it maintained.

Are easements or rights-of-way a specific size/dimension?

Rights-of-way and other easements vary in size and have different usage and maintenance guidelines, based on the type of utility line located within the area.

For instance, easement widths are determined by the need for construction equipment to clear and/or excavate the area to install pipes, poles, cable and/or lines – and to provide room to access the lines for future maintenance or replacement in the event the lines are damaged or need repair.

The following easement requirements allow PWC to install and maintain our equipment safely and provide separation for the safety of the public.

- PWC's electric easements are generally 30 feet wide for overhead distribution lines or 50 feet wide for higher voltage transmission lines. Easements for underground electric may range from 10 to 20 feet in width. This is because the distribution equipment can be spaced closer together and therefore requires less space.
- A typical water or sewer easement is 20 feet in width but may be 30 feet or wider depending upon the diameter of the water or sewer main and the depth of the main.

Why is it important to keep utility easements/rights-of-way clear?

Because easements are necessary for ongoing utility maintenance, permanent structures such as houses, sheds, pools, decks, etc. are not allowed within the easements. When planning improvements to your property, it is important to determine the locations of utility easements and rights-of-way early in the process. Most easements are recorded as a matter of public record and are often identified on surveys and plats. Remember, too, it is always important to call 811 before your dig or excavate to locate any underground utility lines/cables.

- Easements should remain clear of trees and large growing plants that would restrict access and possibly damage lines or equipment. PWC does not restrict the use of easements for driveways, parking lots or lawn areas. Standard residential fencing within or across a utility's easement is typically not a problem. However, you should check with the city or the utility to get approval prior to installation.
- Property owners are responsible for managing trees and other vegetation located in rights-of-way. They must also keep these areas clear of other obstructions. If there is utility failure, it could lead to significant property damage to any structure in or around it.



Never place the following items in right-of-way/easement areas:

- Houses, garages, sheds or barns
- Decks
- Play equipment or tree houses
- Flagpoles
- Recreational vehicles that block access
- Hot tubs or pools
- Fences that block access to a utility pole, cabinet, meter box or manhole
- Antennas or satellite dishes
- Scaffolding or ladders
- Stored materials such as pipes, containers, hay bales, 90-Mechanical equipment or flammable materials