

YOUR TREES & POWER SUPPLY

Property owners and electricity distribution (lines) companies have a legal responsibility to ensure the safety and security of electricity supply for people, businesses, and communities.

Trees and vegetation growing too close to power lines are a key cause of unplanned power outages. That's why the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations are important. It sets out what property owners and Electra are obligated to do to keep everyone safe.

Here's what you need to know about your responsibilities.

THE DANGERS OF TREES NEAR POWER LINES

If trees or branches come into contact with power lines it can cause damage, widespread outages, and create risk of serious injury or death.

As a property owner, you're responsible for any trees on your property, and could be liable for the significant cost of any damage to power lines. That's why it's important to check trees or hedges regularly and take appropriate action if they do pose a risk. If you're unsure what to do, contact us for advice.

Trees need to be kept at a safe distance from power equipment because:

- Children who climb trees close to power lines are at risk of serious injury or death.
- In severe weather, vegetation can become electrically 'live' and may pose an electrocution risk.
- Trees can fall during bad weather, damaging power lines and causing outages.

- Trees close to power lines may cause electrical sparking, resulting in fire.
- Tree roots can grow around underground electricity cables, damaging the insulation and causing power supply failure.

MAINTAINING A SAFE DISTANCE

In October 2024, the Regulations were updated to increase the minimum safe distances between trees and power lines, and a new 'clear to the sky' requirement for some trees. There is a grace period relating to these until 16 October 2026.

If your tree is growing within the Cut-back or Notice Zone (Tree A), you may get a legal notice saying your trees must be trimmed soon because they're getting too close to power equipment.

Should they reach the Growth Limit Zone (Tree B), you will get a legal notice requiring them to be trimmed, which can be done by Electra or an Electra approved contractor.

MANAGING TREES NEAR POWER LINES

Cutting or trimming trees in the vicinity of power lines is dangerous. Touching a live power line or a tree close to the line can result in serious injury, or even death by fatal electric shock.

RESPONSIBILITY

According to the Regulations, no person is permitted within four metres (Controlled Access Zone) of a power line without prior approval from Electra.

Therefore, only Electra or an Electra approved contractor can be used to safely trim or cut down trees growing within four metres of any power line. Request a quote to have your trees trimmed by Electra's certified team of arborists at: www.electra.co.nz/contact-us.

FELLING TREES NEAR POWER LINES

Check there is a distance of at least twice the height of the tree between the tree and any nearby power lines. If it is within this distance you will need to use Electra or an Electra approved contractor, or you could be liable for the cost of any damage to our network if the tree lands on our lines – not to mention the potential safety risk of coming into contact with live lines!

NOTICES

Electra continually checks the network for trees and vegetation that pose a risk to power equipment. You'll receive a Notice if your trees need attention under the Regulations.

You can also declare no interest in your trees near our network. That means you won't be liable for damage the tree causes to the lines, and that we have permission to carry out necessary safety work, including removal.

FIRST CUT OR TRIM

Electra may cover the cost to perform the first cut or trim on a tree encroaching on a power line, if the following conditions apply, or are met:

- according to Electra's records, the trees have not been subject to a previous cut or trim at our cost.
- the trees are not around a service line.
- the trees have not been the subject of a previous agreement, and
- the tree owner grants access to the site.

If all of these conditions apply, Electra will issue you with a Notice and perform the work at no charge to you.

SECOND OR SUBSEQUENT CUT OR TRIM

After that you're responsible for taking care of the trees on your property. This includes organising and paying for Electra or an Electra approved contractor to trim them safely if they're close to power equipment.

Being proactive and inspecting your trees will help ensure the power can stay on for everyone.

Please note that if your trees cause any problems on the electricity network, you may be charged for all repair costs.

FINES

You can be fined up to \$10,000 if you don't comply with written requests to cut/trim your trees or don't tell us the work is taking place. We need a minimum of 3 days' notice.

You can also be fined an additional \$500 for every day this doesn't happen.

If your trees are deemed an immediate danger to the network, we're obligated to remove the hazard. If you haven't kept your trees clear of power lines or not returned the required paperwork, you'll be responsible for all the costs we incur to remove the hazard.

CHAT TO US

Your experience with us is important. If we haven't met your expectations for any reason, please let us know so we can discuss it with you.

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www.electra.co.nz

