

Look Up, Look Out

Safety near overhead power lines

MainPower is committed to providing a safe and reliable electricity supply to all customers. This fact sheet is designed to inform you about safety around electricity, particularly overhead power lines.

Lines down means danger

Bad weather and vehicle accidents can bring lines down. Stay well clear of fallen power lines and warn others of the danger. Keep animals out of the way and always assume the lines are live. If you are inside a vehicle involved in an accident, stay in the vehicle and call MainPower for assistance.

Safety around the home

With electricity comes potential hazards and we want to ensure you know what to look out for and how to deal with a hazard.

Taking precautions when working around the home can prevent injury to yourself or others, as well as reducing the risk of property damage.

- If you are working outside, always look up and around for any wires. Always assume all wires are electricity wires and that they are live.
- Before you start on your outdoor jobs such as water blasting, painting or building near your electricity lines, get them temporarily isolated first. If you need power to carry out your work, arrange an alternative supply.
- Even with a safety isolation, it is your responsibility to test before assuming power is isolated and therefore safe to work.
- Always look up and around before you move your ladder or other long objects that could come into contact with overhead wires.
- If you get something tangled or caught up in an electric wire, do not clear it yourself. Phone MainPower for assistance.

Get wire-wise around trees

Trees too close to power lines are a hazard and a major cause of power failures during bad weather.

Tree owners are responsible for their trees; the results of tree damage to power lines can be a significant cost to a tree owner.

Check trees, hedges and shelter belts regularly. Never trim trees that are too close or overhang power lines.

Due to the risk of danger, cutting trees near live power lines is a very specialised job. MainPower has its own team of experienced and qualified utility arborists, trained to work near live lines.

Contact MainPower for a free tree inspection and quote for trimming work. Before you work on trees near power lines, speak with us and we can tell you how to do this safely.

Work safe near power lines

Vehicles and mobile plant working near overhead power lines can create hazards if they should come into contact with lines.

MainPower requires any mobile plant working near power lines to meet the requirements of the New Zealand Electrical Code of Practice for Electrical Safe Distances (NZECP 34:2001). These rules are a requirement to ensure the safety of the general public and those working near power lines.

The key rule is Section 5.2.1 which reads "The distance between any live overhead electric line and any part of any mobile plant or load carried shall be **at least 4.0 metres**, unless the operator has received written consent from the overhead electric line owner allowing a reduced distance".

To apply for a Close Working Permit or an Over-Height Load Permit, contact MainPower.

FREE SAFETY ISOLATION SERVICE

MainPower offers a free safety isolation service. This provides isolation of lines or cables during work hours to allow you to work around your home safely.

This free service is recommended if you want to work in an area that puts you at risk of touching live power lines. This could be when you are clearing spoutings, repairing leaks on a building roof or painting a barge board. Even with a safety isolation, it is your responsibility to test before assuming power is isolated and therefore safe to work.

CLOSE WORKING PERMIT

You must obtain a close approach permit to work near conductors of overhead electric lines. You must also be competent to work in the vicinity of power lines. Work is defined as any excavation, installation, construction or operation of mobile plant, near overhead power lines.

OVER-HEIGHT LOAD PERMIT

You must obtain an over-height load permit for the movement of an over-height load within the MainPower distribution area. You must also be competent to work in the vicinity of power lines.

Boating safety

As with machinery operators and other workers carrying out work near overhead power lines, boat owners should be aware of their safety obligations under the New Zealand Electrical Code of Practice for Electrical Safe Distances (NZECP 34:2001). For more information, visit the Energy Safety website www.med.govt.nz/energysafety.

Boat owners are at an increased risk of contact with overhead power lines because the masts and rigging of boats may be higher than the power lines. Keep **at least 4.0 meters** away from overhead lines at all times.

- Anyone touching a boat with mast or rigging that is in contact with a power line is at a very severe risk of fatal injury. High voltage electricity can also jump to your mast or aerial if they get near enough to a power line.
- Watch out for overhead lines around boat ramps, mastheads or when towing your boat on land.
- If a boat mast has brought down power lines around a vehicle, the safest way to avoid electric shock is for occupants to stay in the vehicle and contact MainPower for assistance.
- Ensure you are aware of the height of your equipment/mast in both stowed and working positions.
- Lower all masts or equipment to the transport position when relocating your boat or water craft.
- Extra caution is required when launching and retrieving boats with a mast. Power lines may also cross waterways. Keep a lookout for overhead power lines.

Work safe on farms

The use of irrigators needs to comply with the New Zealand Electrical Code of Practice for Electrical Safe Distances (NZECP 34:2001). The code defines that the absolute minimum distance between any overhead electric line and any part of any mobile plant should be **at least 4.0 metres**.

- Remember that irrigation pipes are conductors of electricity.
- Don't spray overhead lines with water, this can result in power outages, fire and electrocution.
- Be aware of the proximity to power lines when moving irrigators down a paddock, and when being shifted along bumpy roads or across paddocks.
- Equipment does not actually need to touch the lines, electricity can 'arc' over through the air in a high voltage system without direct contact.

Be aware of the hazards when working on a farm and follow these safety tips:

- If you think power lines are too low or would like the height checked, contact MainPower.
- Park trucks and large vehicles away from overhead power lines and work as much as possible away from the lines and poles.
- Keep clear of power lines when working on the upper levels of stock trucks or high loads.
- Don't load, unload or assemble metal irrigation pipes close to power lines.
- When moving tall machinery, choose the route where power lines are high enough to give adequate clearance. Always have lifting equipment in a lowered position before moving it under electrical lines.

Contact MainPower

To report a fault: 0508 60 70 80

For electrical emergencies: 0508 60 70 80

For general enquiries:

www.mainpower.co.nz

info@mainpower.co.nz

03 311 8300 (8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Disclaimer: This fact sheet is not an exhaustive list of all safety matters that need to be considered.

Whilst care is taken in the preparation of this material, MainPower does not guarantee the accuracy and completeness of the information.

