

Trees too close to power lines are a hazard and a major cause of power failures during bad weather. They can break power lines and network equipment, resulting in risk of serious injury or death as well as causing widespread power interruptions. This inconveniences farms and households, affects business productivity and causes damage to customers' electronic equipment and appliances.

Tree Owners' Responsibilities

Tree owners are responsible for their trees; the results of tree damage to power lines can be a significant cost to a tree owner. Please check your trees, hedges or shelter belts regularly. If you are not sure what to look for, please call us so we can help. Remember, trees need to be kept a safe distance away from power lines and other electricity network equipment because:

- Children that climb trees close to power lines are at risk of serious injury or death.
- In severe weather conditions, vegetation can become electrically 'live' and may electrocute anyone coming into contact with it.
- In bad weather, trees can topple or branches break away causing damage to power lines resulting in a power outage. In snow or icy conditions, the additional weight on the tree can cause a similar scenario.
- Trees close to lines may cause electrical sparking resulting in fire.
- Tree roots can grow around underground electricity cables, rupturing the insulation and causing power supply failure.

What do the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations Mean to You?

These regulations are to provide a safe electricity supply to you and to protect the security of your electricity supply. They place responsibilities on trees owners (you) and the electricity network operator (MainPower).

The Zones

The regulations specify different zones for trees growing close to power lines and other electricity network equipment: the Notice Zone and the Growth Limit Zone.



If your tree is growing within the Notice Zone (Tree A) you will receive a legal notice from us saying that it must be trimmed soon because it is growing too close to power lines and equipment. If your tree continues to grow into the Growth Limit Zone (Tree B) you will receive a legal notice from us requiring the tree to be trimmed (by an approved contractor) within a specified time frame. This is because the tree is now too close to power lines and equipment, and could cause a power outage and/or harm the public. As you might expect, the notice zones vary depending on the voltage of the power lines:

Overhead line	Notice Zone	Growth Limit Zone
66kV (high voltage)	5.0 metres	4.0 metres
33kV (high voltage)	3.5 metres	2.5 metres
11kV (high voltage)	2.6 metres	1.6 metres
400V/230V (low voltage)	1.5 metres	0.5 metres

kV=kilovolts V=volts

Note:

- These distances are from the power line, not the power pole.
- These distances are a minimum and apply in all conditions, including high wind or snow.
- In most instances, the power lines that go to a house or building are low voltage power lines.
- Power lines that go down a street may be low or high voltage.

Cutting Trees Near Live 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 (arborists trained to work near live lines). Always remember: touching live power lines, or trees close to the lines, can result in serious injury or death.

Cut/Trim Notice

MainPower staff are systematically visiting every area of our network and leaving Cut/Trim Notices with owners of trees that require some action under the regulations. In most cases, the cost of the first cut of trees affecting the MainPower network will be met by us.

2nd Cut/Trim Notice

Many trees have received their free cut at MainPower's cost. Please don't wait to be reminded that your trees need to be cut again. Be proactive, regularly inspect your trees and if they are in either the Notice Zone or the Growth Limit Zone they must be trimmed safely: call us on 03 311 8381 for a free inspection and a quote from our utility arborists. Be aware that if your trees cause any problems on our network, you may be charged for all costs of repair.

Offences Committed by Tree Owners

There are tough penalties for tree owners who do not comply with a written request to cut their trees, or do not advise MainPower on 0508 60 70 80 of the time and location of the cutting work. On summary conviction, tree owners may be liable for a fine not exceeding \$10,000 and a further fine of \$500 for every day on which the offence continues.

If your trees are considered an immediate danger to our network, MainPower has an obligation to remove any hazard. If you have failed to keep your trees clear of power lines, or not returned our paperwork, then as the tree owner you are responsible for all costs incurred by us to remove any hazard.





Want to know more?

Contact us:

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

0508 60 70 80 (24 Hour Fault Line)

03 311 8381 or **027 478 5676**

(Kevin Smith, Vegetation Control Supervisor)

Further information on the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations can be found on our website: www.mainpower.co.nz

MainPower provides a free complaints resolution service. If you have any concerns or a complaint about a MainPower service, please either telephone us on 0800TelIMP (835 567) or email us at feedback@mainpower.co.nz

MainPower is a member of the free and independent Utilities Disputes Ltd: www.utilitiesdisputes.co.nz or phone **0800 22 33 40**.



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Your Power Supply and Trees

Electricity
(Hazards from Trees)
Regulations

