

Electricity Hazards (from Trees) Regulations

Purpose of Regulations

The purpose of these Regulations is to protect the **safety of the public** and the **security of electricity supply** by:

- Prescribing minimum distances between power lines and trees;
- Establishing who is responsible for cutting or trimming trees close to power lines;
- Outlining rules and penalties if the Regulations are not complied with;
- Providing an arbitration system to resolve disputes.

MainPower relies on the common sense of customers to ensure that trees on their property are not allowed to grow in close proximity to power lines. However on occasion, MainPower will be left with no alternative but to use these Regulations to ensure that safety and security is maintained. The Regulations provide MainPower with the ability to issue "Hazard Warning Notices" and "Cut or Trim Notices" in support of this.

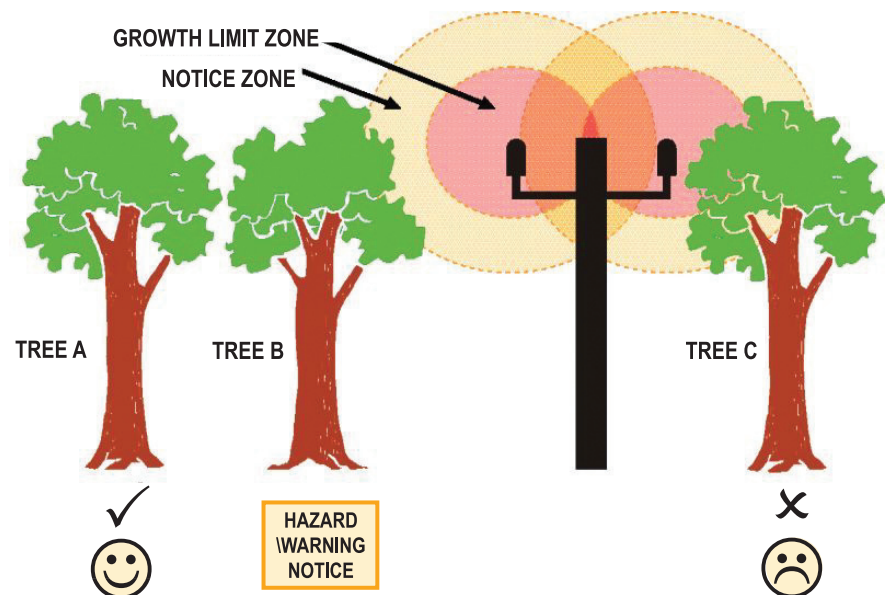
This article is only an introduction to these Regulations. Further information can be found on MainPower's website www.mainpower.co.nz or by phoning MainPower's Operations Manager on (03) 311 8300.

Danger of Trees Near Power Lines

Safety of the public is paramount. There is a real temptation for young children to climb trees and where these trees are close to power lines, there is always the risk of serious injury or even death. Removal of trees near power lines is essential for this reason alone.

Trees in windy or snow conditions can also cause power lines to clash, disrupting supply to customers and can, when conditions are dry, result in serious fires.

Cutting and trimming trees in the vicinity of power lines can also result in serious injury or even death and the best way to avoid this is to ensure that trees are always planted or cut well back from any power line (Refer Tree "A" in diagram). Where possible, MainPower will disconnect the supply of electricity free of charge during normal working hours where customers feel that they would be exposing themselves to risk by cutting or trimming trees close to power lines. In many cases, MainPower can undertake short duration tree trimming work around lines free of charge.



| OVERHEAD LINE | NOTICE ZONE | GROWTH LIMIT ZONE |
|---------------|-------------|-------------------|
| High Voltage | 2.6 metres | 1.6 metres |
| Low Voltage | 1.5 metres | 0.5 metre |

Note:

1. Above distances are from power line.
2. Distance represents all conditions e.g. wind or snow.
3. Low Voltage power line is between the house/building and MainPower's transformer

What is a Hazard Warning Notice?

Notice in writing that it has come to MainPower's attention that a tree (or trees) encroaches the "Notice Zone" (Refer Tree "B" in diagram) and must not encroach the "Growth Limit Zone" (Refer Tree "C" in diagram) and if it does, MainPower will immediately issue a "Cut or Trim Notice".

Growth Limit Zone is the space around the power line where trees must not encroach even in windy or snow conditions. Notice Zone means a distance of one metre beyond the Growth Limit Zone.

Tree Owner's Response to a Hazard Warning Notice:

- **Cut or Trim the Tree/Trees**
Make arrangements with MainPower or other contractor to cut or trim the tree to ensure that the tree does not encroach the "Growth Limit Zone".
- **Give a "No Interest" Notice**
May provide MainPower with a "No Interest" tree notice, in which case MainPower may remove the tree at its cost (conditions apply).
- **Apply for a Dispensation**
Apply to MainPower for a dispensation from cutting or trimming the tree. MainPower will communicate its decision on the terms of any dispensation within five working days.
- **Go to Arbitration**
May, if a dispensation is not granted or where there is disagreement over the terms of a dispensation, take the matter to arbitration.

What is a Cut or Trim Notice?

If MainPower becomes aware of a tree encroaching the Growth Limit Zone, it will give notice in writing to the tree owner that the tree must be cut or trimmed.

Tree Owner's Response to a Cut or Trim Notice:

- **Act on Notice**
Cut or trim the tree within 10 working days (25 working days if no Hazard Warning Notice given), so that the tree does not encroach the Notice Zone. The cut or trim must be undertaken by a contractor approved by MainPower.
- **Advise MainPower**
Must provide MainPower with at least 3 working days' notice of the time and location of the cutting or trimming of the tree.
- **Other Responses**
May also respond on the same basis as to a Hazard Warning Notice. In other words, the tree owner may:
 - Give a "No Interest" Notice
 - Apply for a Dispensation
 - Go to Arbitration

Responsibility for costs of cutting or trimming will depend on the circumstances of each case. Further information on this matter can be obtained from MainPower.

Regulations provide for Heavy Fines

A tree owner who has been given a "Cut or Trim Notice" and fails to cut or trim the tree, or fails to advise MainPower of the time and location of cutting or trimming of the tree, may be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding \$10,000 and if the offence is a continuing one, a further fine not exceeding \$500 for every day which the offence continues.

No proceedings may be taken if the tree owner has applied for a dispensation from MainPower or where a dispute with respect to the tree concerned has been referred to an arbitrator.