

Trees and Your Power Supply – An Overview of the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003

Trees and Power Lines

Trees in contact with power lines are a safety hazard. There is the potential for injury or even death by electrocution if someone comes into contact with a tree made "live" by a power line. Children in particular are attracted to trees that they can climb. Where these trees are close to power lines, there is always the risk of serious injury or even death. Trees, especially during wind, snow or storm conditions, can cause power cuts. Your power supply may be disrupted when trees or branches break, damaging poles, power lines or other structures. Similarly, when conditions are dry, trees too close to power lines can cause serious fires.

Tree Regulations

All power line companies in New Zealand are required by law to administer the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003.

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

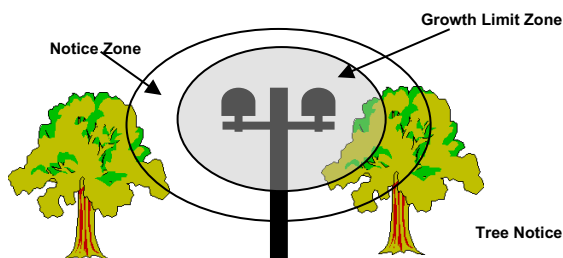
- ◆ Prescribing minimum distances between power lines and trees;
- ◆ Assigning responsibilities for trimming or felling trees close to power lines;
- ◆ Establishing rules and penalties if the regulations are not complied with; and
- ◆ Providing an arbitration system to resolve disputes between electricity lines companies and tree owners over the operation of the regulations

Network Tasman is your community-owned lines company and has worked with land/tree owners over the years to keep the power flowing safely to all consumers. The regulations require Network Tasman to issue a range of notices to support these objectives. Trees outside these regulations will come under Network Tasman's Vegetation Policy.

Tree Clearances

The Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003 state how close trees may come to power lines before trimming or felling is required. These measurements or **Zones** are known as the **Growth Limit Zone** and the **Notice Zone**.

The **Growth Limit Zone** is the space around the power line that trees **MUST NOT** encroach, **EVEN** in windy or stormy conditions. Trees that have grown into the **Growth Limit Zone** must be trimmed or felled by a **Qualified Contractor** so they are clear of the Notice Zone.



Overhead Line	Notice Zone	Growth Limit Zone
33kV - High Voltage	3.5 metres	2.5 metres
11kV – High Voltage	2.6 metres	1.6 metres
LV (400V/230V) – Low Voltage	1.5 metres	0.5 metres

Note: Distances shown are from lines under all weather conditions, especially strong winds and snow.

Cutting Trees near Power Lines

Trimming and felling trees close to power lines is **dangerous**. Touching a power line or even a tree that is in contact with a power line can result in serious injury or death. **You are not permitted to trim or fell any trees that have grown into the Growth Limit Zone**, they must only be cut by one of the **Qualified Contractors** listed on this sheet. They have specific training and qualifications to work safely close to live power lines along with specialist equipment. They are approved by Network Tasman to work on trees within the Growth Limit Zone and are able to obtain the necessary permits for close cutting work (in accordance with the OSH Code of Practice for Safety and Health in Tree Work Part 2 and the Electrical Code of Practice 34).

Tree Contractors

The trees notified to you **MUST** only be cut by one of the following tree contractors:

Treescape Phone: 03 544 0588
Email: scott.barker@treescape.co.nz
Nelmac Phone: 03 546 0910
Email: service@nelmac.co.nz

No other tree contractors are currently permitted to cut these trees.

CT Tree Notice

Network Tasman surveys trees and power lines and will issue a Cut Trim (CT) Tree Notice to a tree owner if they have trees growing inside the Growth Limit Zone. When you receive a CT Notice you will need to decide whether you want to retain the trees and have them trimmed ('interest' in the trees) OR whether you have 'no interest' in retaining the trees and have them felled.

Trimming Trees – Free Trim

Trees are eligible for ONE FREE TRIM (with the exception of shelter belts). Network Tasman has a database of all trees that have already had a free trim. You will be offered a free trim on the CT Notice if your trees are eligible. To accept a free trim tick Box A on the CT Notice, then complete and return the white copy to Network Tasman. We will arrange for our tree contractor to trim the trees.

Once your tree has had a free trim you are responsible for maintaining it (at your cost) so that it doesn't grow back into the Growth Limit Zone.

Trimming Trees – No Free Trim

If a free trim is not available and you want to keep the tree you will need to have it trimmed at your cost by one of the qualified contractors listed on this sheet. Tick Box B on the CT Notice, then complete and return the white copy to Network Tasman. Get the qualified contractor to sign & date the bottom of the green copy once the tree work is complete and return it to Network Tasman.

Felling Trees

If you don't want to keep the tree (have 'no interest' in it) tick Box C on the CT Notice, then complete and return the white copy to Network Tasman. We will arrange for our tree contractor to fell the tree. (NB In some cases we may decide to trim rather than fell the tree).

Legal Requirement

It is a legal requirement that the work must be completed within **45 working days** of receiving the CT Notice. The tree owner must also contact Network Tasman on **0800 508 098** at least **three working days** before the work starts, to confirm the location, the date and who is carrying out the work.

Dispensation

In exceptional circumstances tree owners may request dispensation from the standard clearances specified in a CT Notice. Applications must be made in writing to Network Tasman within **five days** of receiving the Tree Notice. Arbitrator details as of December 2012 are: Brad Cadwallader, 33 Cropp Place, Richmond 7020
Email: brad.cadwallader@cropp-place.nz

Government fines if you don't comply with Regulations

A tree owner who has been given a Cut Trim Notice and fails to have their tree trimmed or felled so that it does not encroach the Growth Limit Zone, or fails to advise Network Tasman of the time and location of trimming or felling of the tree within the timeframes specified on the notice, may be liable on summary conviction to a fine of up to \$10,000, and if the offence is a continuing one, a further fine of up to \$500 for every day the offence continues. **Note: Fines are issued by the Government, not Network Tasman.**

If tree owners fail to comply with the regulations they may also be liable for the costs associated with any damage or power outages caused to Network Tasman's network (power lines) by their trees. They may also be liable to third parties for loss resulting from power disruption.