



# TREES AND YOUR POWER SUPPLY

## Purpose of the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003

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 rules for who is responsible for cutting or trimming trees close to power lines;
- Outlining liability if the rules and regulations are not complied with;
- Providing an arbitration system for disputes between electricity lines companies and tree owners over the operation of the regulations.

Your electricity lines company (Westpower) relies on the common sense of its consumers to “do the right thing” and ensure that trees on their property do not grow within close proximity to any power lines. However, on occasion, Westpower will be left with no alternative but to use the regulations to ensure that safety and security of supply are maintained. The regulations provide Westpower with the ability to issue a range of notices to support these objectives.



## **Danger of Trees Near Power Lines**

Safety of the public is paramount to Westpower. Trees in contact with power lines are a safety hazard, with the potential for causing injury or even death by electrocution if someone touches a tree made “live” by a power line. Trees in windy or stormy 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 near power lines can cause serious fires.

**Remember - you don't have to touch a live line to receive a shock!**

## **Dangers of Cutting Trees Near Power Lines**

Cutting and trimming trees in the vicinity of power lines is dangerous. Touching the live power line or a tree close to the line, can result in serious injury or even death by electrocution. You can contact Westpower to either temporarily disconnect your power before starting work (**this is a free service**) or, Westpower can refer you to specialised contractors fully qualified and experienced in tree trimming around live power lines.

### Public Safety Reminders

- Keep clear of overhead lines
- Treat all lines as live at all times
- Report any suspected faults to 0800 768 241



For more information about Trees and Your Power Supply, contact Westpower on 0800 768 242 or visit [www.westpower.co.nz](http://www.westpower.co.nz)

## Notifications Issued by Westpower

### **Hazard Warning Notice**

The purpose of the hazard warning notice is to inform you that a tree(s) has been identified on your property which now resides within the Notice Zone. You are not currently required to do anything, however if this tree(s) continues to grow into the Growth Limit Zone, Westpower will issue you with a Cut/Trim Notice to notify you that your tree(s) must be trimmed.

### **Cut/Trim Notice**

The purpose of this notice is to advise you that there is a tree(s) on your property that is encroaching on power lines. There are three options listed on this notice – **option A - first free trim, option B - no interest and option C - tree owner to arrange trim**. You are then required to select your preferred option, sign and date the notice and return to Westpower either via email or post.

### **Cut/Trim Notice - Tree Owner Responsibility**

If your tree(s) encroach onto power lines and you have already received a first free trim from Westpower, you will then be issued with a ‘Cut/Trim Notice – Tree Owner Responsibility’. There are three options listed on the notice – each option requires the tree owner to fund the majority of the tree trimming or removal work.

### **Amenity Notice**

An amenity notice gives the landowner an opportunity to ‘adopt’ a tree(s) on road reserve and become responsible for maintenance. If you do not wish to adopt the tree(s) and pay for its maintenance - do not return the notice.

### **Tree Owners Can Be Imposed With Heavy Fines**

A tree owner who has been issued with a ‘Cut or Trim Notice’ and fails to cut or trim the tree so that it does not encroach the Notice Zone, or fails to advise Westpower 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.

### **Planting Trees Near Power lines**

Serious consideration should be given to the species and placement of trees on your property to ensure they do not interfere with the power lines now and in the future. Remember - that lovely little shrub you planted may become a 5 metre monster in a few years!

## **Zones**

OVERHEAD LINES	NOTICE ZONE	GROWTH LIMIT ZONE
33 kV – High Voltage	3.5 metres	2.5 metres
11 kV – High Voltage	2.6 metres	1.6 metres
400V/230V – Low Voltage	1.5 metres	0.5 metres

The Electricity (Hazards From Trees) Regulations 2003 state exactly how close trees can come into contact with power lines before cutting or trimming is required. These measurements are known as zones. The Growth Limit Zone is the space around a power line where trees must not encroach. The Notice Zone is the distance measured one metre beyond the Growth Zone (please refer to the diagram below).

