

Don't put your life on the line

Keeping tree industry workers
safe around powerlines



Creating a safer state
with electricity and gas

Electricity can kill in an instant.

Don't put your life on the line— always look up and live when you are working near powerlines.

Trees and branches can conduct electricity and cause electric shock or death.

Tradespeople, vegetation workers and arborists need to take special care when working near overhead powerlines because a simple mistake or a shortcut can be fatal.

Follow these simple steps to help stay safe.

Know the No Go Zone

The first step is to know the No Go Zone framework. Please refer to page 5 for the minimum clearance guidelines.

It is important to know what skills and training you require to perform certain tasks. This will vary depending on who you are working for and the type of electric lines you are working near.

There are three different requirements that vegetation workers may need to comply with depending upon who they are working for, or engaged by, and their qualifications and training. The three requirements depend on whether working for or contracted to:

1. a private company or person,
2. a council, or
3. a Victorian Electricity Supply Industry (VESI) company.

Before you start work

In addition to the No Go Zone and training requirements, it's important to anticipate all risks and think outside the square.

If you're working in a tree near powerlines and particularly if you're holding a long branch you are potentially in a very dangerous situation.

- ESV recommends those working for a private company or person should always maintain the 3m No Go Zone clearance from powerlines when climbing trees to remain safe.

Note: At a minimum, private contractors must comply with the requirements contained in Regulation 318 of Victoria's *Electricity Safety (Installations) Regulations 2009*.

- Always check that the foliage is far enough away from powerlines for safe work to commence.
- Always maintain control of vegetation when cutting near powerlines, know where the arc of a branch will fall, or cut in small sections to maintain clearance from powerlines.
- Ensure that all workers are properly trained and qualified for the job you are doing.
- Only cut branches or sections of branches that are a manageable size.

Only proceed if it's safe

If there is any concern regarding the safety of a tree clearing job, don't proceed. Discuss job safety with the local electricity distributor before starting work. You are required to notify them when working near their powerlines.

Always remember that you have the right to refuse work if the job is unsafe.

Do the job properly

All workers should constantly monitor the location of machinery and equipment that could come into contact with powerlines, including EWPs, ladders, ropes, polesaws and power pruners.

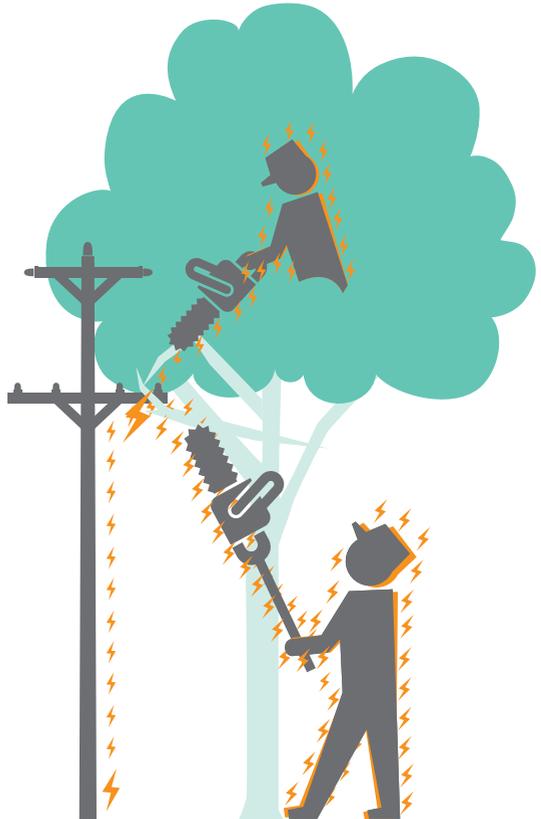
Every worker should know the No Go Zone guidelines for working near powerlines and also:

- shall be suitably trained, qualified, authorised and experienced
- always complete a hazard analysis before starting work
- discuss identified hazards within your work group so everyone is aware
- never cut corners or start a job unless it is safe to proceed
- repeatedly check the location of powerlines while work is underway as their position can change significantly due to wind and temperature.

Trees and branches can conduct electricity. Cutting a branch that falls onto a powerline can cause a fault to earth and electrocution. This can occur whether operating polesaws or chainsaws from the ground or in a tree.

Warn other workers

Tradespeople, vegetation workers and arborists who are working near powerlines and electrical infrastructure need to be extremely careful that they or the equipment they are using doesn't touch live wires. Anyone entering the worksite needs to be aware of these risks. Actions should be taken to ensure that people who don't understand these hazards, or are not appropriately trained and authorised, are kept well away.



Guidelines for minimum clearances for vegetation workers.

These guidelines provide vegetation workers with guidance on the safe working distance from overhead electrical assets.

There are three different requirements that vegetation workers may need to comply with depending upon who they are working for, or engaged by, and their qualifications and training. The three requirements are explained further below.

Private work

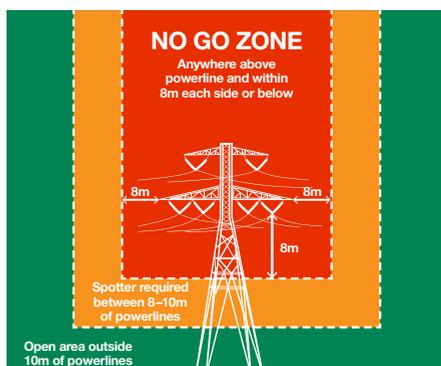
ESV recommends private tree contractors maintain the No Go Zone 3m exclusion zone. However, at a minimum, private contractors must comply with the requirements contained in Regulation 318 of Victoria's *Electricity Safety (Installations) Regulations 2009*.

The latest version of the No Go Zone rules can be found at www.worksafe.vic.gov.au.

Overhead powerlines on poles



Overhead powerlines on towers



Council work

Vegetation management work:

in the vicinity of, or near live overhead powerlines performed by persons on behalf of a council that has electric line clearance responsibilities defined by the Act is to be undertaken in compliance with:

- the *Code of Practice on electrical safety for work on or near high voltage electrical apparatus*; the Blue Book, and
- *ESV Electrical safety rules for vegetation management work near overhead powerlines by non-electrical workers*.

For relevant overhead electrical asset clearances see Figure 1 and Table A.

- Further information on the training requirements for persons **not** working for, or under the control of an electricity asset owner but working for other responsible person/s is contained within the ESV document *Electrical safety rules for vegetation management work near overhead powerlines by non-electrical workers*.

This document is available on ESV's website.

Victorian electricity supply industry (VESI) work

Vegetation management work:

in the vicinity of or near live overhead powerlines by persons working for an Electricity asset owner is to be undertaken in compliance with:

- the VESI Vegetation Management Guideline.

Further information on the training requirements for persons working for, or under the control of an electricity asset owner is also contained within the VESI document titled *Vegetation Management Guideline* that can be found online at www.vesi.com.au.



Look up and live

Get to know Victoria's No Go Zone guidelines—they provide a framework for working safely near electrical infrastructure.

Figure 1

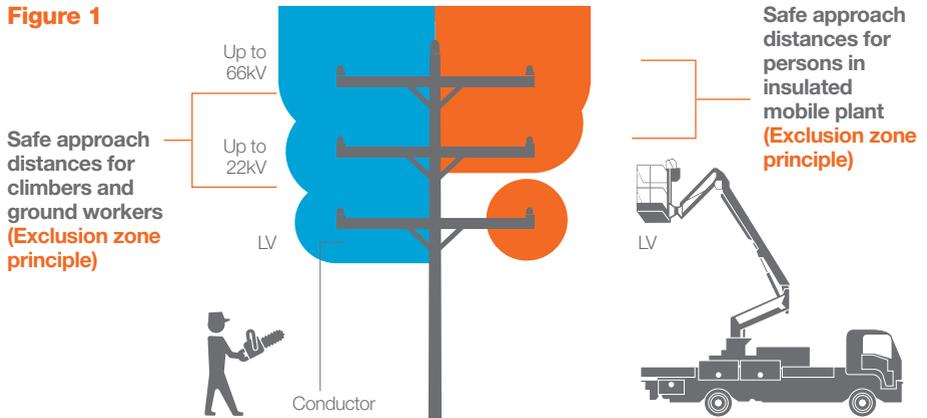


Table A: Safe approach distances for vegetation workers engaged by/working for council

Council vegetation work	Nominal phase to phase AC voltage	Personal (body) clearances (mm)	Insulated mobile plant (mm)	Tools and equipment (mm)
Working from insulated mobile plant	LV insulated cable	No contact	200 [#]	200
	LV open wire	300	1000 [#]	300
	HV up to 22*	1000	1200 [#]	1000
	HV from 22 up to 66*	2000	2000 [#]	2000
For ground worker and climber	LV insulated cable	200		200
	LV open wire*	1000		1000
	HV up to 22*	1200		1000
	HV from 22 up to 66*	2000		2000

Notes:

- ESV recommends private tree contractors maintain the NGZ 3m exclusion zone. However, at a minimum, private contractors must comply with the requirements contained in Regulation 318 of Victoria's Electricity Safety (Installations) Regulations 2009.
- For VESI vegetation work approach distances refer to www.vesi.com.au.

* **Work over conductor exclusion zones not permitted.**

[#] ESV recommended minimum insulated mobile plant clearances.

Questions?

Call and ask the relevant distribution business for advice.

AusNet Services
1300 360 795

Powercor
13 22 06

CitiPower
1300 301 101

Jemena
1300 131 871

United Energy
1300 131 689

Public Transport Victoria (PTV)
1800 800 007

For further information go to
www.esv.vic.gov.au or phone
ESV on **(03) 9203 9700**.

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