



# Vegetation clearance around powerlines

## Compliance and enforcement priority 2021/22

<b>Why is vegetation clearance a priority?</b>	<p>Vegetation that comes into contact with powerlines can start fires, cause power outages and could result in electrocutions. It is considered a state-significant risk as it has the potential to start devastating bushfires.</p>
<b>Who has the compliance obligation?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MECs (major electricity companies - for keeping trees clear of powerlines).</li> <li>• Local councils (for trees on public land they manage).</li> <li>• Land occupiers (for private electric lines and service lines).</li> <li>• Other powerline owners or operators such as railway operators, wind and solar farms and large industrial sites.</li> </ul>
<b>How does the hazard or non-compliance occur?</b>	<p>Responsible persons failing to clear vegetation and allowing it to contact powerlines in contravention of the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020 and Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance (the Code).</p>
<b>What compliance action will ESV take?</b>	<p>ESV will conduct a series of safety regulation programs to ensure responsible persons are complying. This includes a review and approval of electrical line clearance management plans, system auditing and inspections to confirm trees are kept clear of electrical lines.</p> <p>ESV will work with duty holders to inform them of their clearance obligations, through regular engagement, development of guidance material and direction of how to comply with the new infringement provisions taking effect in June 2022.</p>
<b>What enforcement action may ESV take?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue notices requiring clearance within risk-proportionate timeframes (higher risks requiring faster responses).</li> <li>• Require amendments to the responsible person's electric line clearance management plan.</li> <li>• Prosecution where serious safety risks are identified, where there is reckless conduct or where otherwise considered appropriate having regard to the nature, severity and gravity of the offence.</li> </ul>
<b>What are the measures and targets?</b>	<p>In 2020/21, ESV identified 253 instances of Major Electricity Company (MEC) related, safety-critical non-compliant vegetation (and 1,134 non-compliances in total), and 445 instances of local council-related, safety-critical non-compliant vegetation (and 949 non-compliances in total).</p> <p>ESV's targets for the FY 2021/22 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10% reduction in safety-critical non-compliant vegetation.</li> <li>• 10% reduction in overall non-compliant vegetation.</li> </ul>
<b>Who will ESV work with?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electric Line Clearance Consultative Committee.</li> <li>• Victorian community.</li> </ul>