

A Dangerous Combination

Trees growing close to power lines and other electrical conductors pose a serious risk to public safety as well as the possibility they may cause power cuts or voltage problems for connected consumers. If a tree comes into contact with a live electrical conductor then the current may travel through the tree and into the ground. Anyone touching the tree or touching something else that is touching the tree could suffer a serious electric shock. Some of those more frequently at risk are people carrying out tree maintenance, or children playing in or around a tree, both of whom can cause branches to move and come into contact with the lines.



Emergencies

For any emergencies such as a fallen tree or branch having damaged our lines, please call our 24 hour faults service on 07 870 2000 (Te Awamutu) or 07 827 2000 (Cambridge).

For general tree enquiries ph. 07 870 4014 (Te Awamutu) or 07 827 4014 (Cambridge).

Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003

These Regulations set out the responsibilities of tree owners and lines companies in relation to trees and power lines. Waipa Networks has developed procedures in response to these regulations and are summarised as follows:

- If we become aware of a tree that you are responsible for growing within the Notice Zone we may issue you with a Hazard Warning Notice. This notice will remind you that you must not let the tree grow into the Growth Limit Zone.
- If Waipa Networks becomes aware of a tree that you are responsible for growing into the Growth Limit Zone then we will issue you with a Cut or Trim Notice.
- You must have the tree trimmed so that it no longer encroaches the Notice Zone. You can apply for Dispensation if you believe you have a good reason for the tree to be allowed to grow closer to the lines than normal.
- Waipa Networks will trim a tree free of charge the first time (providing it has not already been trimmed by Waipa Networks for free before the Regulations came into effect). After that you are responsible for the costs of any future trimming.
- At any stage you can declare 'No Interest' in a tree and Waipa Networks will have to meet the costs of any future trimming, or we may decide to remove the tree altogether.

Please note, this is just a summary of the Regulations. If you would like more detail please feel free to call our office and speak to our tree expert. You can also view the full Regulations online at <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/> or order a copy through your local book store. If we need to issue you with a Notice regarding one of your trees we will provide you with full details of your rights and responsibilities with the Notice.

What happens if I do not comply with the Tree Regulations?

You will be committing an offence as a tree owner if you have been given a Cut or Trim Notice in relation to a tree and you:

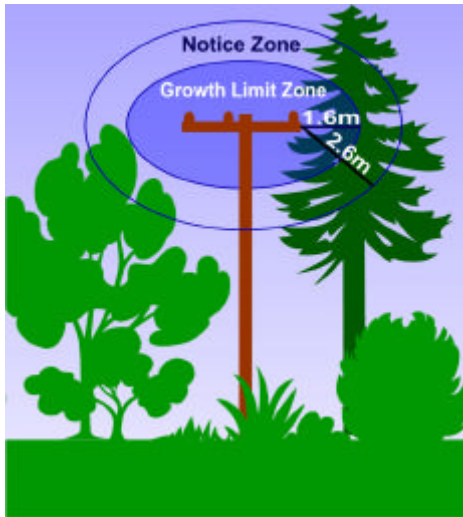
- fail, without reasonable excuse, to cause the tree to be cut or trimmed in accordance with the Regulations, or
- fail, without reasonable excuse, to advise Waipa Networks of the time and location of the cutting or trimming of the tree.

If you commit an offence you could be fined up to \$10,000 and \$500 for every day or part of a day during which the offence has continued.

Tree Trimming - the dangers

Before attempting to clear tree foliage in the vicinity of live conductors, you should phone Waipa Networks for advice. Any tree growing in the Notice or Growth Limit Zones (see diagram) should be trimmed by a Waipa Networks authorised person. This is to ensure that tree owners do not place themselves or others in danger due to lack of expertise or safety equipment. Legally you are able to trim them yourself, but we do not recommend it due to the dangers present. Although the tree foliage may appear to be at a safe distance from the lines, once you begin the work the tree may move due to pressure placed on branches, random wind gusts, or other external interference. Branches tend to hang lower when the leaves are wet, so if it starts to rain or if the leaves are already wet and start to dry you should expect some movement. The path of debris should also be considered when attempting tree maintenance. Branches above the lines should not be allowed to fall onto the lines below. Additionally, tree branches tend to be fairly elastic, so you should also be wary of any that may flick up as they are trimmed or as other surrounding branches are cleared. These and other dangers mean we strongly recommend you do not attempt the work yourself.

In the Zone



How far apart should they be?

The Electricity (Hazards From Trees) Regulations 2003 define two zones : a Growth Limit Zone and a Notice Zone (please refer to above diagram).

Growth Limit Zone

In relation to Waipa Networks equipment, this is the area within 1.6 metres in any direction of our 11,000v electrical conductors or 0.5 metres for 400/230v electrical conductors. If any of your tree foliage is within this Zone then it must be trimmed to beyond the Notice Zone.

Notice Zone

This is the area 1 metre in all directions around the Growth Limit Zone. If we become aware of trees growing in this zone we may issue you with a Hazard Warning Notice to let you know that the tree must not be allowed to grow into the Growth Limit Zone.

What about my Service Main?

A Service Main is the line that connects your property to our Network. This is most commonly in the form of an overhead or underground line that runs from the power pole in the street to your house. This is not owned by Waipa Networks and as such is not covered by the Regulations. You must still keep trees clear of this line and if you need to carry out a trim Waipa Networks can temporarily disconnect the power for you. This service is free provided it is no longer than 15 minutes during business hours. If you would like more information about Safety Disconnections then please give our office a call.



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Trees and Power lines

What you need to know



Waipa Networks

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