



Powerline maintenance

Compliance and enforcement priority 2022–23

Why is powerline maintenance a priority?	<p>The failure of powerlines, and associated assets, in high winds or hot weather can lead to fires or bushfires with significant consequences for people and property. Poorly maintained powerlines may result in interruptions or outages to electricity supply. ESV recently introduced asset inspections to provide community assurance about the effective maintenance of powerlines and to develop insight about safety-related asset defects, and the process of identifying defects, proactively, before asset failure. The focus on this activity needs to continue into 2022–23.</p>
Who has the compliance obligation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Major electricity companies (MECs).Specified operators – operators of above ground electric lines in high bushfire risk areas who are not MECs.High voltage customers.Other parties with accountability for the management of powerpoles.
How does the hazard or non-compliance occur?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">At risk powerlines not identified, maintained or managed adequately by the MECs.Powerline assets in service are beyond their intended design life.
What compliance action will ESV take?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensuring MECs comply with powerline management practices by auditing electricity safety management schemes (ESMS) and bushfire mitigation plans (BMP).Performing site inspections of powerlines and associated assets.
What enforcement action may ESV take?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Requiring revisions to ESMS and/or BMP.Issuing improvement notices.Issuing directions.Prosecution for non-compliance with ESMS or BMP, or breach of general duties.
What are the targets?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Nine pre-bushfire period audits of MEC BMP.Two audits of specified operator BMP.Inspect 5,000 network assets.
What will be measured?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The number of audits performed.Non-compliances identified (monitored as a percentage).Proportionate enforcement action taken to resolve identified non-compliances.Monitoring timely implementation of MEC asset management remedial actions and relevant updates to ESMS and BMP.
What do we want to achieve?	Improved regulatory activities, informed by the data, themes and trends from identified non-compliances, which increase compliance levels and reduce safety issues and risks.
Who will ESV work with?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Australian Energy Regulator (AER).Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).The Victorian community.