



Vegetation clearance around powerlines

Compliance and enforcement priority 2022–23

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Why is vegetation clearance a priority?	<p>Vegetation that makes contact with powerlines can start fires, cause power outages and can result in electrocutions. It is considered a state-significant risk as it has the potential to start devastating bushfires.</p> <p>Analysis of ESV inspection data of vegetation clearance in hazardous bushfire risk areas, during the declared fire danger period 2021–22, found deficiencies in major electricity company (MEC) performance that requires ongoing attention by ESV, and action by the MECs and other responsible persons to ensure safety.</p>
Who has the compliance obligation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Major electricity companies (MECs) – for keeping trees clear of powerlines.• Local councils – for the trees on public land that they manage.• Land occupiers – for private electric lines and service lines.• Other powerline owners or operators, such as railway operators, and operators of wind and solar farms and large industrial sites.
How does the hazard or non-compliance occur?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsible persons failing to clear vegetation and allowing it to make contact with powerlines.
What compliance action will ESV take?	<p>ESV will conduct a series of safety regulation programs to ensure responsible persons are complying with regulation. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• review and approval of electric line clearance management plans• vegetation management and safety systems auditing• inspections to confirm trees are kept clear of electric lines. <p>ESV will inform duty holders of their clearance obligations through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• regular engagement• guidance material.
What enforcement action may ESV take?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Issuing notices to require clearance within risk-proportionate timeframes (higher risks require faster responses).• Requiring amendments to the responsible person's electric line clearance management plan.• Issuing infringements notices.• Prosecuting when:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– serious or systemic safety risks are identified– there is reckless conduct– we consider the nature, severity and gravity of the offence warrants enforcement action.

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What are the targets?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10% reduction of 2021–22 baseline rates of non-compliance (includes safety critical non-compliance) by the end of 2022–23.• Review and approve electric line clearance management plans for:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– 10 MECs (reviewed only – five year approval cycle)– 10 local councils– 4 other responsible persons (ORP).• Perform system audits on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– 5 MECs– 10 local councils– 4 ORP.• Inspect:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– 6,000 hazardous bushfire risk area (HBRA) spans– 6,000 low bushfire risk area (LBRA) spans.
What will be measured?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Electric line clearance management plans reviewed and approved.• Vegetation management and safety systems audits performed.• Inspections completed.• Non-compliances identified (monitored as a percentage).• Enforcement action performed to resolve non-compliances identified.
What do we want to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhanced regulatory activities, informed by the 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">• Electric Line Clearance Consultative Committee.• Responsible persons.• The Victorian community.