



# Private Electric Lines Your Responsibilities 2011/12



**SP AusNet™**  
A member of Singapore Power Group

# mission zero

Our safety vision is symbolised by the simple expression missionZero. When it comes to the safety of our people, contractors and visitors, Zero injuries is the only acceptable target. We will not compromise on safety and we will not tolerate unsafe acts and behaviours. It is this mindset that drives us to ensure there are no negative impacts on our families and communities as a result of our business operations. To achieve our safety vision, our mission must be to work together to implement a common strategy with unified purpose and consistency of attitude.

## *Please note:*

*The Electricity Safety (Installations) Regulations 2009 impose a stringent and rigorous requirement in relation to the undergrounding of defective POELs.*

*Regulations state that any POEL located in a hazardous bushfire risk area that is found to be more than 20 per cent defective (either defective wiring and/or poles) must be replaced underground, at the cost of the POEL owner.*

# Which are our powerlines? Which are your private overhead electric lines?

You are only responsible for your own private electric lines.

Private electric lines begin at the point of supply (see diagrams overleaf). After the point of supply, all the wires, poles, and any other electrical equipment (other than SP AusNet metering equipment) on your property are your responsibility. High voltage lines are the responsibility of SP AusNet, even if they cross your property. We will keep them well maintained and free from trees and branches. If you are not sure whether your lines are private electric lines or high voltage lines please contact SP AusNet on 1300 360 795 (Business hours: 8am - 5pm, Monday - Friday).

## Situation 1

### SP AusNet overhead line is in a public roadway

Where an overhead line is carried on to the land by private poles, the point of supply is the first private pole.

- **Private overhead electric line**

Tree clearing and maintenance is your responsibility.

- **SP AusNet aerial service cable**

Maintenance and tree trimming on the public roadway is SP AusNet's or the council's responsibility, however, the tree trimming on your property around the aerial service cable is your responsibility.

## Situation 2

### SP AusNet overhead line is on private land

Most of SP AusNet's lines have a transformer fitted near your building. The point of supply is where your lines are connected to SP AusNet's pole. Connection boxes and circuit breakers mounted on SP AusNet's pole and associated with your line(s) are your responsibility.

- **Private overhead electric lines**

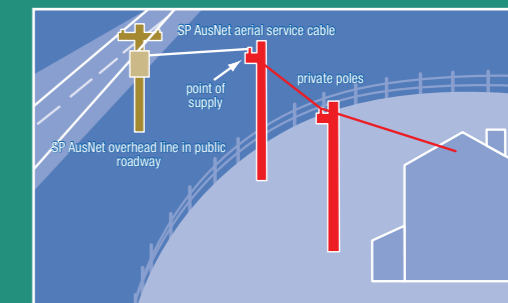
Tree clearing and maintenance is your responsibility.

- **High Voltage SP AusNet line**

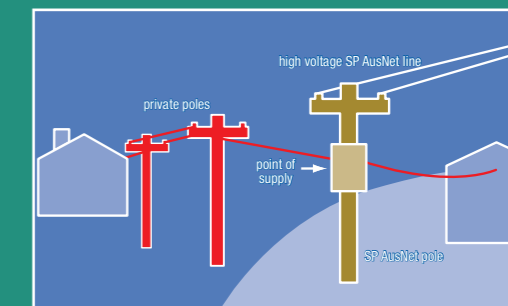
(attached above transformer) Tree clearing and maintenance is SP AusNet's responsibility.

## Which situation applies to you?

Situation 1

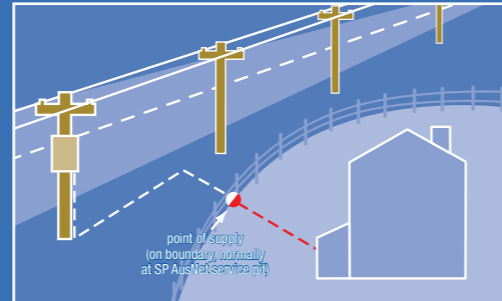


Situation 2

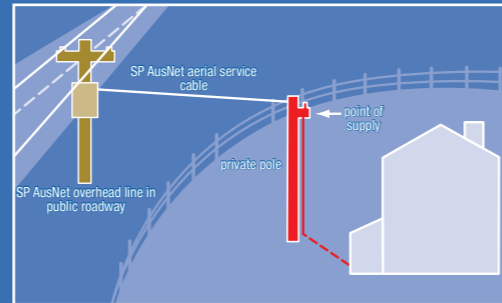


## Which situation applies to you?

Situation 3



Situation 4



### Situation 3

Underground cable from SP AusNet overhead lines is in a public roadway.

The point of supply is where the cable crosses your property boundary or commonly at a pit on the property boundary.

- Private underground electric line.

Vegetation clearance and maintenance is your responsibility.

- SP AusNet service (underground service cable).

Maintenance is SP AusNet's responsibility.

### Situation 4

SP AusNet overhead line is in a public roadway. The overhead line is carried to a pole on private land. It then changes to an underground line.

The point of supply is where the lines are connected to the private pole.

- Private underground electric line and private pole.

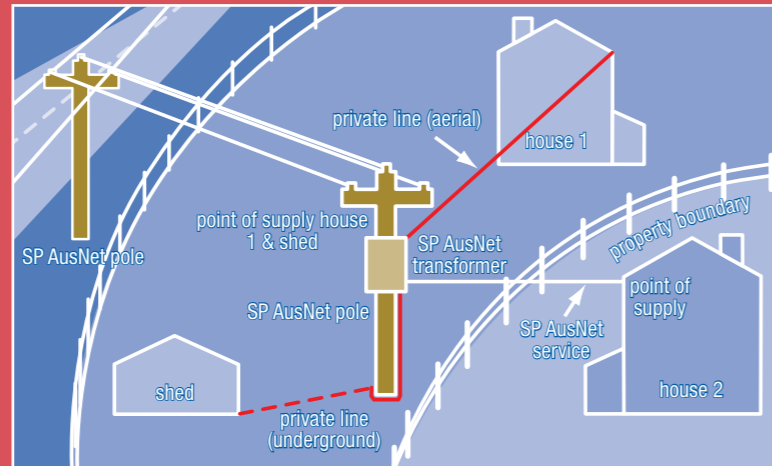
Vegetation clearance and maintenance is your responsibility.

- SP AusNet aerial service cable.

Maintenance and tree trimming in the public roadway is SP AusNet's or the council's responsibility, however the tree trimming on your property around the aerial service cable is your responsibility.

## Which situation applies to you?

Situation 5



### Situation 5

**SP AusNet overhead powerline is on private land.**

The point of supply for the 1st house (and shed) is where the private lines are connected to the SP AusNet pole.

However, the 2nd house is situated across a property boundary, so an SP AusNet line is connected straight to the house. The point of supply is where the SP AusNet line is connected at the house.

- **1st house private overhead electric line and private underground line (to shed).**

Maintenance is your responsibility.

- **SP AusNet overhead powerline and service cable to 2nd house.**

Maintenance and tree clearing in the property of the 1st house is SP AusNet's responsibility.

Tree clearing around service cable in the property of the 2nd house is the responsibility of the 2nd house owner.

## How to look after powerlines

Trees shall not be removed without prior consultation and agreement from SP AusNet. Only species with suitable growth habits should be planted near or under powerlines.

### CLEARANCE SPACE

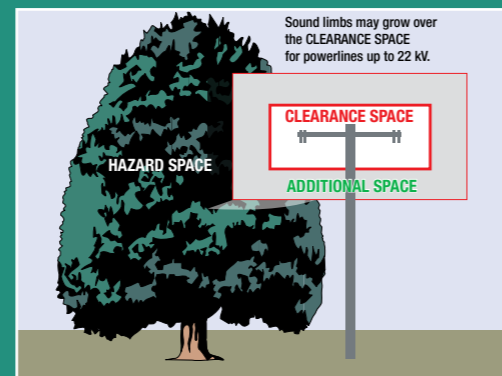
Space clear of vegetation.

### REGROWTH SPACE

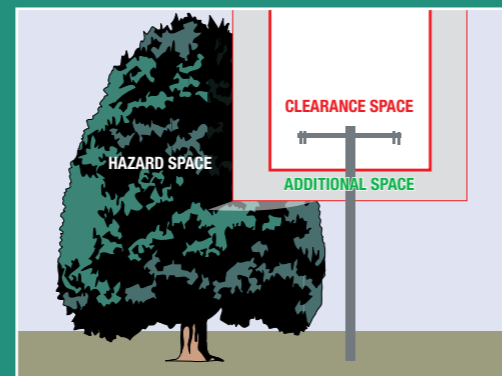
Average annual growth X Number of years in vegetation management cycle.

A tree planting guide is available from SP AusNet at [www.sp-ausnet.com.au/sustainability/environment](http://www.sp-ausnet.com.au/sustainability/environment).

Low Bushfire risk area



Hazardous Bushfire risk area



### Inspecting lines

Inspect your private electric lines regularly (at least annually) or ask a registered electrical contractor (electrician) to do it for you. Use binoculars or a telescope to inspect cable insulation (covering) from the ground. A list of things to look for is provided at the back of this brochure.

### Warning

**Under no circumstances climb a pole or approach the wires yourself. Contact with live wires can kill. Tree branches touching lines may also be live. Repairs should always be carried out by a registered electrical contractor (electrician).**

### SP AusNet obligations

The Electricity Safety (Bushfire Mitigation) Regulations 2003 require SP AusNet to inspect private overhead electric lines.

SP AusNet regularly inspects its powerlines in your area. SP AusNet will also inspect the part of your overhead electric lines from the point of supply to the meter and, if SP AusNet finds any defects, will issue you with a rectification notice that you need to comply with.

SP AusNet's current cycle for inspections of private overhead electric lines is at least once every 37 months.

### Keep trees clear of private overhead electric lines

For trees that already exist near overhead electric lines, advice should be sought from SP AusNet on 1300 360 795 before you attempt to remove or trim them.

Overhead electric lines can be damaged by contact with trees and overhead limbs. Falling branches may cause the lines to clash or fall to the ground. This could result in someone being electrocuted or starting a bushfire.

The minimum horizontal and vertical clearance required from vegetation, as per the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulation 2010, is as follows:

### Insulated wires

1 metre plus an allowance for regrowth.

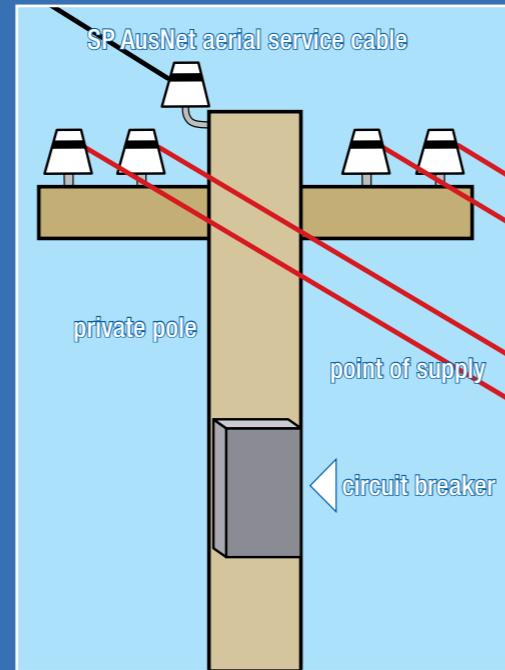
### Bare wires

2 metres plus an allowance for regrowth.

### Warning

**Properly certified tree clearing personnel must always be used to cut or clear vegetation away from powerlines.**

## Permits, circuit breakers. What to do?



### Council permits

In some areas, a council planning permit is required before you cut or prune a tree. However if SP AusNet serves you with a written notice that urgent tree pruning is required, you do not have to seek a council planning permit before proceeding and engaging tree clearing personnel.

### Circuit breakers

When an electrician (registered electrical contractor) carries out maintenance on your private overhead electric lines, a circuit breaker must be fitted to your line, if not already fitted. A circuit breaker is a switch installed at the start of your private electric line to switch off power whenever necessary. The circuit breaker will 'trip' (switch off automatically) only under the same conditions as a fuse would blow. Should a circuit breaker 'trip', you may be able to restore electricity supply without waiting for an SP AusNet representative to attend but you should get an electrician to check that the cause of the 'trip' has been fixed.

### Caution

**Where a circuit breaker has been switched off to isolate supply for tree pruning, get your electrician (registered electrical contractor) to prove that the overhead private electric line has been isolated before starting work.**

### SP AusNet's rights

SP AusNet may inspect your electrical installation (or any part of it) at any time. If a dangerous situation is discovered, we may disconnect electricity supply without prior notice. We may also check private poles and overhead lines and issue you a written notice if we find any defects. But this will not reduce in any way the need for you to inspect and arrange necessary repairs.

### Total Fire Ban

On days of Total Fire Ban and in conditions where it is deemed prohibitively dangerous, SP AusNet has the right to disconnect defective private overhead lines from its supply mains. A disconnection and reconnection fee will be charged for this.

If any of the following problems exist, your line may be in need of urgent attention.

For safety reasons, have a properly certified person remove tree limbs near electric lines and have a registered electrical contractor (electrician) check the line and carry out necessary repairs without delay.

**1. If any section of your private overhead electric line has more than one bare wire:** Yes No

- a. Are there any branches or trees within 2 metres of any bare wire or hanging over the wire?  Yes  No
- b. Is any wire hanging much lower than other wires in the same section?  Yes  No
- c. Has anyone seen the wires clash together in high winds?  Yes  No
- d. Are the wires physically separated with spreaders?  Yes  No
- e. Are there any broken strands of wire?  Yes  No
- f. Are any crossarms split, loose or not square to the pole?  Yes  No

**2. Where your private overhead electric line is only one insulated cable:** Yes No

- g. Are there any trees or branches within 1 metre of the insulated cable?  Yes  No
- h. Are there any gaps, cracks or pieces missing from the insulation (covering) of the cable?  Yes  No
- i. Does the cable contact metallic objects such as fascia or fittings?  Yes  No

## Things to look for

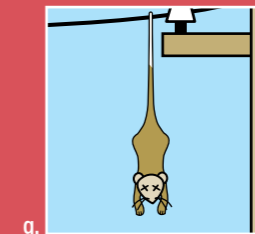
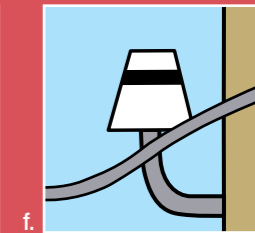
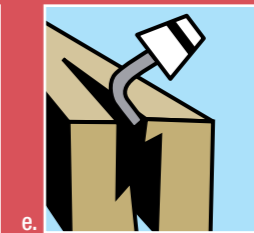
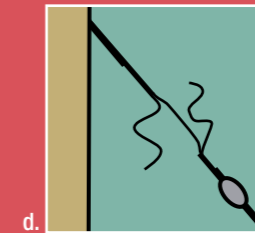
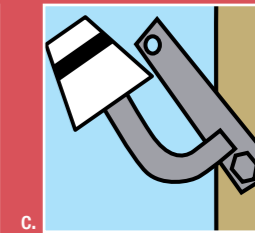
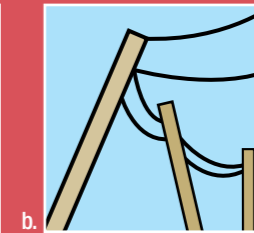
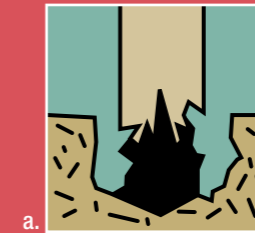


3. For either type of private overhead electric line:

Yes No

- a. Are poles rotting at or just below ground level?  
Dig carefully all around the pole to check,  
but beware of any underground wiring to the pole.  Yes  No
- b. Are any poles leaning excessively?  Yes  No
- c. Are any brackets pulling away from the pole(s) or buildings?  
Are any other fittings crooked or loose?  Yes  No
- d. Are any stay (guy) wires loose or broken?  Yes  No
- e. Are any insulators leaning or damaged?  Yes  No
- f. Are wires securely fastened to insulators?  Yes  No
- g. Is there dead wildlife on the powerline?  Yes  No

## Things to look for



### Underground electric lines – a better choice

Should your overhead electric lines need substantial repair, SP AusNet is required by legislation to direct you to replace them with an underground cable.

An underground cable is far safer than an overhead line. The risk of fire is virtually eliminated. The danger of electrocution through contact with live wires is also reduced. Care still needs to be taken when digging near an underground powerline.

Underground cables are more reliable, and are not damaged by storms or weather. They also make your property look better.

Overhead electric lines continually need maintenance, unlike underground cables that require very little maintenance and no tree clearing. This, of course, saves time and money.

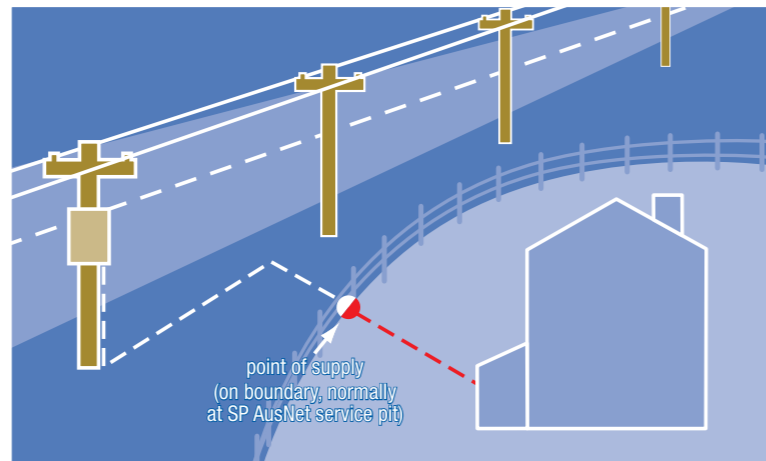
**For these reasons we recommend you make plans for the eventual conversion to underground electric lines.**

**For further information contact SP AusNet on 1300 360 795**

If electricity is supplied from a roadway outside your property, and you decide to convert to an underground electric line, SP AusNet will arrange the installation of an underground cable to a pit (the 'point of supply') at your property boundary.

To assist the conversion of overhead electric lines to an underground cable, SP AusNet, at its discretion, will undertake pit installation works to your property boundary or other location, as determined appropriate, at no charge.

#### Underground cable from SP AusNet overhead line



## Legal responsibility

Electricity customers have always been responsible for their own private electric lines, whether overhead or underground. To clarify where this responsibility begins the legislation was amended in early 1984. The legislation defines the 'point of supply' and confirms your responsibility for maintenance of your private electric lines including the need to keep trees clear of these lines. A private electric line is described in the Electricity Safety Act 1998. Reference should also be made to the Services and Installation Rules for construction and maintenance of private electric lines.

If a fault in your electrical installation causes injury or property damage you could be involved in costly litigation.

Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) may also be consulted for advice or clarification of your responsibilities.

ESV Tel: (03) 9203 9700

Web: [www.esv.vic.gov.au](http://www.esv.vic.gov.au)



## SP AusNet

Customer Enquiries

Tel: **1300 360 795**

Business hours: 8am – 5pm, Monday – Friday

Service Difficulties and Faults

Tel: **131 799**

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

[www.sp-ausnet.com.au](http://www.sp-ausnet.com.au)



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