

# Tree safety

Firstlight Network is the electricity lines company that keeps the lights on for Tairāwhiti and Wairoa.

Trees close to power lines are a safety hazard, with the potential for causing injury or death by electrocution. They are also a major cause of power outages. When conditions are dry, trees near power lines can start fires. Trees can also damage power lines and equipment during high winds.

Overgrown trees can prevent our crews from repairing equipment quickly and delay the process of restoring power to get our communities back up and running.

## Your obligations as a tree owner

Electricity network companies and tree owners must both comply with their obligations under the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Amendment Regulations 2024. The purpose of these regulations is to protect the safety of the public and the supply of electricity.

If a tree is on your property and growing into power lines, our team can undertake an inspection at your request. The tree may qualify for a free trim or removal, if we haven't cut it before. Please see the full criteria on our website.

## Get in touch with our tree team

For more details, see Trees and Lines in our Safety Centre section at [firstlightnetwork.co.nz](https://www.firstlightnetwork.co.nz)

If you have any questions or need some advice, give our tree team a call on **(06) 869 0700**.

For more details and to submit an online enquiry form visit: [firstlightnetwork.co.nz/i-want-to/get-a-service/have-a-tree-trimmed/](https://www.firstlightnetwork.co.nz/i-want-to/get-a-service/have-a-tree-trimmed/)

Or, email us: [trees@firstlightnetwork.co.nz](mailto:trees@firstlightnetwork.co.nz)

## Safety advice

**New planting:** Before starting any new planting, check for power lines and underground cables. Always check the plant size information.

**Shelterbelts:** If your shelterbelt is within four metres of the power lines, you'll need to use an approved shelterbelt trimming company or Network arborist. If the shelterbelt is too close, the power lines may need to be turned off for safety (at your cost) while the shelterbelt is trimmed.

**Trees near conductors:** For safety reasons, tree control work near conductors must be carried out by a Firstlight Network-approved contractor.

**Private lines:** Private overhead service mains connect some customers to our network through high voltage and low voltage overhead electric lines. The owner is responsible for the control of any trees close to these.

**Overhead lines:** Always treat all lines as live. If you're working near overhead lines, check that there's at least four metres clearance for any scaffolding or machinery.

**Fallen lines:** Never approach fallen power lines. For your safety, stay at least 10 metres away. If you see fallen lines, or trees on lines, please call the Firstlight Network 24/7 faults line immediately on **0800 206 207**.

## Find an approved tree contractor

**IMPORTANT:** Cutting or trimming trees near power lines must only be carried out by approved tree contractors with the right training and equipment. You cannot do this work yourself.

**Contact Firstlight Network for an approved tree contractor in our region.**

**Faults and emergencies (24 hours): 0800 206 207**

## Maintaining a safe distance

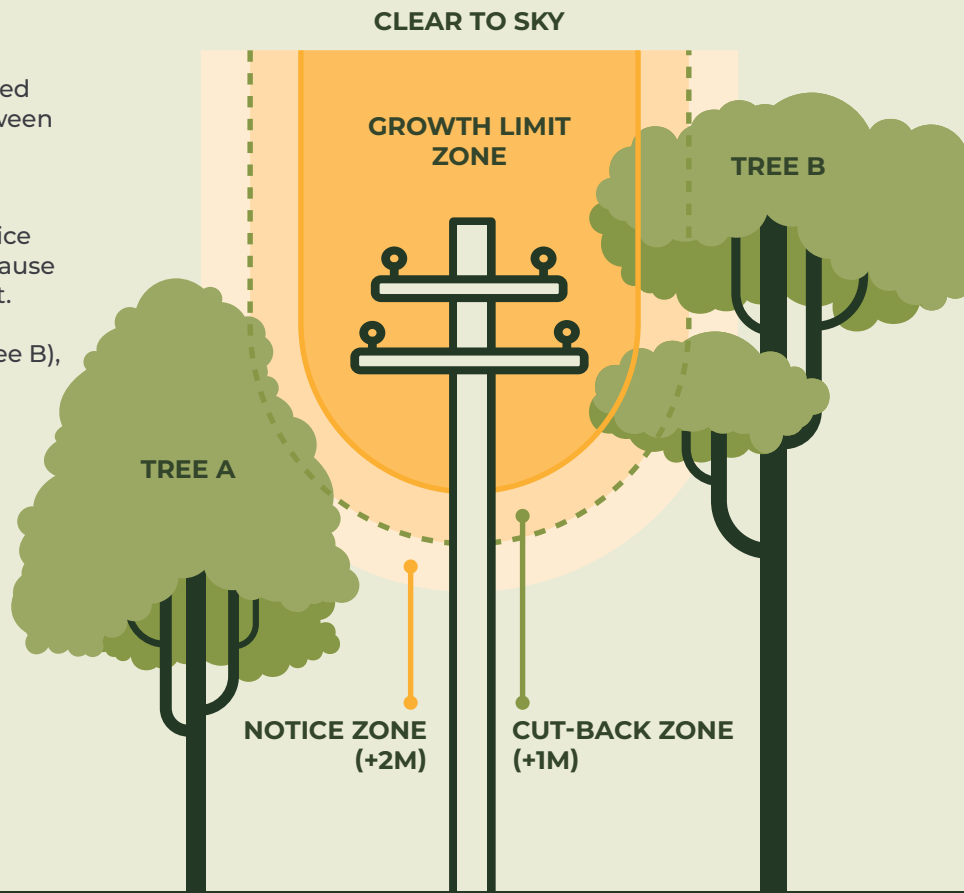
In October 2024, the Regulations were updated to increase the minimum safe distances between trees and power lines.

If your tree is growing within the Cut-back or Notice Zone (Tree A), you may get a legal notice saying your trees must be trimmed soon because they're getting too close to power equipment.

Should they reach the Growth Limit Zone (Tree B), you will get a legal notice requiring them to be trimmed. Check our websites for a list of authorised contractors.

The Growth Limit Zone has a new 'clear to the sky' requirement for spans more than 150m to prevent vegetation overhang over high voltage electricity lines.

There is a grace period relating to these changes until 16 October 2026.



OVERHEAD LINE VOLTAGE	GROWTH LIMIT ZONE	CUT-BACK ZONE	NOTICE ZONE
Power lines (230-400 V)	0.5m	1.5m	2.5m
High voltage lines (6.6 kV)	1.6m	2.6m	3.6m
High voltage lines (11kV)	1.6m	2.6m	3.6m
High voltage lines (33 kV)*	2.5m	3.5m	4.5m
High voltage lines (50-66 kV)*	3.0m	4.0m	5.0m
High voltage lines (66 kV or more)*	4.0m	5.0m	6.0m

### \* Clear to the sky requirement

- These distances are from the power line, not the power pole
- These distances are a minimum and apply in all conditions, including high wind or snow
- In most instances, the power lines that go to a house or building are low voltage power lines

- Power lines that go down a street may be low or high voltage
- For spans greater than 150 metres, additional clearances apply
- Trees protected by district plans are excluded from the 'clear to the sky' requirements

## 'Cut or trim' notice

We carry out regular surveys throughout the region and will issue a 'Cut or Trim' notice to owners of trees that have grown into the growth limit zone. If you've been sent a notice it means that your tree is dangerously close to live electricity lines.

Once you've received a notice, you have two options:

1. Keep your tree and have it trimmed. You've been notified because your tree is growing close to live power lines. The first cut is free - the second time, you'll need to pay.
2. Remove the tree. If you don't want to take care of keeping the tree at a safe distance from our lines, you can declare in writing that you have 'no interest'. We'll then decide whether to trim or fell it.

You must return the permission form allowing our contractor to either cut or trim the tree.

If you are a tree owner who is given notice to cut or trim a tree, and you fail to do so, or you fail to inform Firstlight Network of the time of the cut or trim, if convicted of an offence you could receive a one-off fine of up to \$10,000.

You can also be fined an additional \$500 for every day this doesn't happen.

Where a tree has come into contact with an overhead line or poses a serious hazard to the conductor, Firstlight Network may cut the tree as required, without notifying the tree owner.

