

# 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) Regulations 2003. The purpose of these regulations is to protect the safety of the public and the supply of electricity.

A tree is your responsibility if you own the land it's growing on. Under the regulations, trees must be kept clear of power lines, as shown overleaf.

This leaflet explains your responsibilities as a tree owner, including what happens when you receive a 'hazard warning' or 'cut or trim' notice.

We're here to help you understand the regulations and your obligations, and to make sure overgrown trees don't cause issues with power lines in our region.

For example, 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, when we haven't cut it before.

## Get in touch with our tree team

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

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

You can return the online enquiry form here: [firstlightnetwork.co.nz/i-want-to/get-a-service/have-a-tree-trimmed/](https://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)

## 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.

**These are the Firstlight Network-approved tree contractors in our region.**

**Advanced Tree Solutions**  
Phone 027 395 9153 | [ats.kiwi.nz](https://ats.kiwi.nz)

**ArborCare Tree Company**  
Phone (06) 862 5785 | [actco.co.nz](https://actco.co.nz)

**Eastland Treecare**  
Phone (06) 862 5833

**Roberts Tree Surgeons**  
Phone (06) 868 6463 | [robertstreesurgeons.co.nz](https://robertstreesurgeons.co.nz)

## The different zones to know about

**Notice zone:** The notice zone extends one metre beyond the growth limit zone. If your trees reach this zone, you may receive a 'hazard warning' notice from Firstlight Network, cautioning you that the trees must not enter the growth limit zone.

**Growth limit zone:** No part of a tree should be inside this zone. If you own a tree or other vegetation encroaching on this zone, Firstlight Network will notify you that the tree's first cut or trim will be carried out free of charge. You must return the permission form allowing our contractor to undertake this work.

The notice and growth limit zones for trees vary, depending on the voltage of the lines nearby:

OVERHEAD LINE	NOTICE ZONE	GROWTH LIMIT ZONE
<b>High Voltage</b>		
110kV	5.0m	4.0m
50kV	4.0m	3.0m
33kV	3.5m	2.5m
11kV	2.6m	1.6m
<b>Low Voltage</b>		
400V/230V	1.5m	0.5m
<b>Service main</b>	1.5m	0.5m

### 'Cut or trim' notice

To keep our lines working and safe for our community, 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:

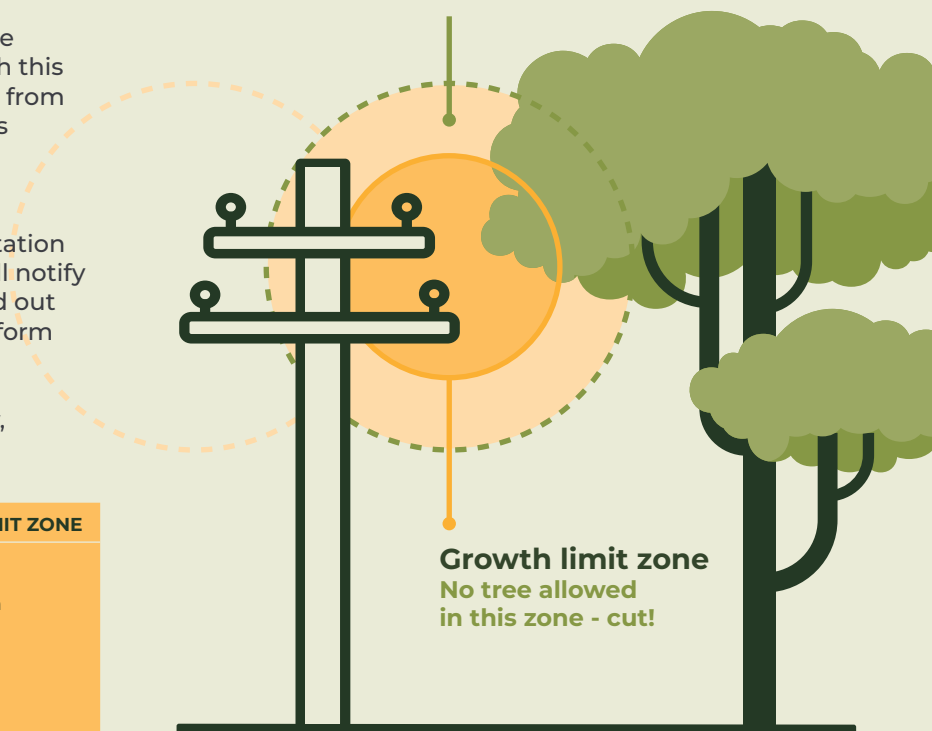
1. Keep your tree and have it trimmed. You've been notified because your tree is growing close to live power lines. The first cut is free - the second time, you'll need to pay.
2. Remove the tree. If you don't want to take care of keeping the tree at a safe distance from our lines, you can declare in 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, you could be fined up to \$10,000 plus \$500 a day. You could also be liable for outage costs and power line repairs if damage has been caused by your trees.

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.

**Notice zone**  
Time to arrange a trim



**Growth limit zone**  
No tree allowed in this zone - cut!

### Safety advice

**New planting:** Before starting any new planting, check for power lines and underground cables. The easiest way to avoid problems is to choose the right tree for the right place. Always check the plant size information.

**Shelterbelts:** If you have a shelterbelt on your property, keep trimming it as usual, but bear in mind the same rules apply as for trees near power lines. Talk to us, or one of our approved contractors, and make sure the trees don't encroach on the notice zone. 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. Be careful when you're working on vehicles with raised apparatus, such as drills, grain augers and ladders. High voltage electricity can jump. Call us first and get the right advice before planning any building project, or starting evacuation work near overhead lines.

**Fallen lines:** Never approach fallen power lines. For your safety, stay at least 10 metres away. If a line falls on a vehicle, don't touch the vehicle. If you see fallen lines, or trees on lines, please call the Firstlight Network 24/7 faults line immediately on 0800 206 207.

