



# TREES AND YOUR POWER SUPPLY

## An Introduction to the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003

### Purpose of the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003

The purpose of these Regulations is to protect the **safety of the public** and the **security of electricity supply** by:

- Prescribing minimum distances between power lines and trees;
- Establishing rules for who is responsible for cutting or trimming trees close to power lines;
- Outlining liability if the rules and Regulations are not complied with; and
- Providing an arbitration system for disputes between electricity lines companies and tree owners over the operation of the regulations.

Buller Electricity relies on the common sense of its customers to “do the right thing” and ensure that trees on their property are not allowed to grow in close proximity to power lines. However on occasion, Buller Electricity will be left with no alternative but to use the regulations to ensure that safety and security of supply are maintained. The regulations provide Buller Electricity with the ability to issue a range of notices to support these objectives.

Further information can be found on [www.bullernetwork.co.nz](http://www.bullernetwork.co.nz) or by contacting Buller Electricity Limited on 03 788 8171.

### Danger of Trees Near Power Lines

Safety of the public is paramount to Buller Electricity Limited. Trees in contact with power lines are a safety hazard, with the potential for causing injury or even death by electrocution if someone touches a tree made “live” by a power line. Trees in windy or stormy conditions can cause power cuts. Your power supply may be disrupted when trees or branches break damaging poles, power lines or other structures. Similarly, when conditions are dry trees near power lines can cause serious fires.

**Remember - you don't have to touch a live line to receive a shock!**

### Dangers of Cutting Trees Near Power Lines

Cutting and trimming trees in the vicinity of power lines is dangerous. Touching the live power line or a tree close to the line, can result in serious injury or even death by electrocution.

You can contact Buller Electricity to either disconnect your power before starting work or Buller Electricity can refer you to specialised contractors fully qualified and experienced in tree trimming around live power lines.

### Planting Trees Near Power lines

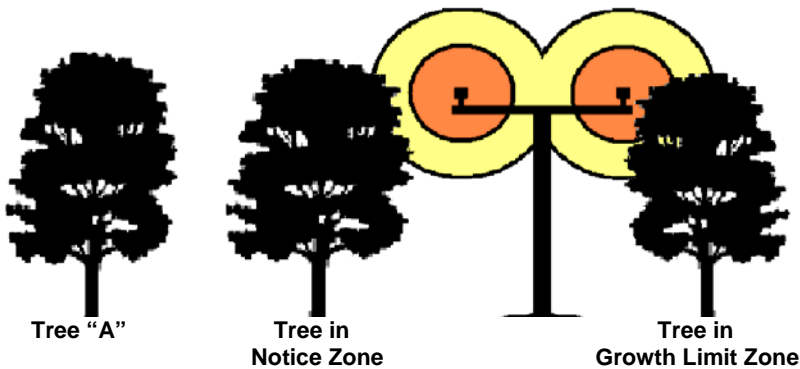
Serious consideration should be given to the species and placement of trees on your property to ensure they do not interfere with the power lines now and in the future. (Refer to Tree “A” in the diagram). Further information on trees suitable for planting near power lines can be obtained on [www.bullernetwork.co.nz](http://www.bullernetwork.co.nz)

**Remember - that lovely little shrub you planted may become a 5 metre monster in a few years.**

### Zones

The Electricity (Hazards From Trees) Regulations 2003 state exactly how close trees may come to power lines before cutting or trimming is required. These measurements or **Zones** are known as the **Growth Limit Zone** and the **Notice Zone**.

The **Growth Limit Zone** is the space around the power line where trees must not encroach even in windy or stormy conditions. The **Notice Zone** is one metre beyond the **Growth Limit Zone** (Refer to Diagram).



OVERHEAD LINE	NOTICE ZONE	GROWTH LIMIT ZONE
33kV- High Voltage	3.5 metres	2.5 metres
11kV- High Voltage	2.6 metres	1.6 metres
400V/ 230V -Low Voltage	1.5 metres	½ metre

- Note:
1. The above distances are from power line.
  2. Distances must be maintained under all conditions eg. High wind.
  3. Low voltage is the power line between the house/building and Buller Electricity's transformer.

### BEL Tree IDType (A)

If Buller Electricity becomes aware of a tree encroaching into the Notice Zone, the tree/vegetation will be photographed and issued an individual identification number.

### BEL Tree Hazard Warning Notice (Type B)

This is a Notice in writing from Buller Electricity warning the tree owner that a tree is encroaching the **Notice Zone** and must not encroach the **Growth Limit Zone**. If the tree continues growing into the **Growth Limit Zone** Buller Electricity can issue a **Cut or Trim Notice**.

**Remember – this is a good time to be proactive!**

**Note: Are you aware that you may be liable for all costs associated with any damage or power outages caused to Buller Electricity's network (power lines) by your trees?**

### BEL Tree Amnesty Trim/Cut Notice (Type C)

The **First Cut or Trim Notice** issued by Buller Electricity to the tree owner differs from all subsequent notices because **Buller Electricity meets the cost of the first cut or trim of the tree** (provided no prior agreement is in place and provided the tree owner grants access to the site). Subsequent tree clearance work will be the tree owner's responsibility.

### BEL Tree Trim/Cut Notice (Type D)

This **Cut or Trim Notice** issued by Buller Electricity is to tree owners that have had tree work done in the past resulting from an Amnesty Notice. By regulation the tree owner has 25-45 working days to act on the notice. The tree owner is accountable for all cost associated with the trim/cut.

### BEL Tree Trim/Cut Warning Notice (Type E)

This warning notice is a follow-up on previous notices sent and states the trees are critically dangerous. Unless action is taken within 10 days from the notice date BEL will remove the hazard and the tree owner will be accountable for all costs.

### New Regulations Provide for Heavy Fines

A tree owner who has been given a **Cut or Trim Notice** and fails to cut or trim the tree so that it does not encroach the **Notice Zone**, or fails to advise Buller Electricity of the time and location of cutting or trimming of the tree, may be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding \$10,000 and if the offence is a continuing one, a further fine not exceeding \$500 for every day which the offence continues.

No proceedings may be taken if the tree owner has applied for a dispensation from Buller Electricity or where a dispute with respect to the tree concerned has been referred to an arbitrator.

### What happens if I'm a Tree Owner?

Buller Electricity will issue you with a Tree Notice. The notice type is dependant on how close the tree is to powerlines and weather or not other Notices have been issued. Sign both forms, keep one and return the original to Buller Electricity Limited, P O Box 243, Westport.

### If I ignore the Notice?

You may miss out on a free cut or trim and may be charged for any work needed to clear the trees from the power lines.

Under the Regulations Buller Electricity must remove any immediate danger posed by trees near power lines that are causing a serious hazard to persons or property. You may be liable for the costs of this work if you have received a previous warning of the potential danger created by the tree or could have failed to comply with terms of a notice. Refer The Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003 (regulation 14)

### Responsibility for cutting

Responsibility for costs of cutting or trimming will depend on the circumstances of each case, but after the first cut it will usually rest with the tree owner.

### What must I do if I am a Shelterbelt Owner?

If you have a shelter belt on your property, continue to trim as you have in the past. Make arrangements with Buller Electricity or other approved contractors to cut or trim the shelterbelt to ensure that the trees do not encroach the **Notice Zone**.

Note: The first free cut and trim may not apply due to past agreements under the Shelterbelt Code of Practice.

### DOING NOTHING DOES NOT REMOVE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

### What must I do if I receive a BEL Tree Hazard Notice Type (B)? (Notice Zone)

Make arrangements with Buller Electricity or other approved contractors to cut or trim the tree to ensure that the tree does not encroach the **Growth Limit Zone**.

### What must I do if I receive a Tree Amnesty trim/Cut Notice?

Complete and sign the **First Cut or Trim Notice** to be entitled to your free first cut and trim (conditions apply). Failure to grant access could void this entitlement.

### What must I do if I receive a BEL Trim/Cut Notice Type (D)?

#### The Tree Owner must Act on Notice

The notice must be acted on within 45 working days. The tree must be trimmed so that the tree does not encroach the **Notice Zone**. The cut or trim must be undertaken by a contractor approved by Buller Electricity.

### What happens if I want to employ an approved Operator other than Buller Electricity?

#### The tree owner must advise Buller Electricity when cutting

The tree owner must provide Buller Electricity with at least 3 working days' notice of the time and location of the cutting or trimming of the tree. If you fail to notify Buller Electricity you are liable for a fine of up to \$10,000 and \$500 per day for every day that the offence continues.