

# SA Power Networks Managing trees around powerlines

Keeping the community safe and maintaining reliability



SA Power Networks takes its regulatory obligations and the safety of South Australians seriously and is committed to continuously improving how we manage vegetation near powerlines.

~**40%**  
of **OUTAGES** in South Australia are caused by **VEGETATION**

Some tree growth can **PREVENT SAFE ACCESS** to powerlines, which may delay power restoration, particularly in windy conditions.

## Who is responsible for trimming?

State legislation sets out specific requirements for property owners/occupiers and SA Power Networks.

### Responsibility of SA POWER NETWORKS

SA Power Networks is responsible for maintaining the clearance zone around all public powerlines. On private land, we are also responsible for keeping naturally occurring vegetation away from powerlines.

### Responsibility of the owner/occupier

The owner/occupier of private property is responsible for keeping the required clearance zone free of planted or nurtured vegetation around the powerlines that supply their property. A private supply line only supplies you and your property, and operates at 19,000 volts or less.

## When do we prune vegetation?

**1 YEAR** for **HIGH BUSHFIRE RISK AREAS**

In high bushfire risk areas, we undertake an annual program of vegetation clearance.

**3 YEARS** for **NON-BUSHFIRE RISK AREAS**

In non-bushfire risk areas, we undertake a three-year program of vegetation clearance.

## How much needs to be trimmed?

This is determined by legislation and varies according to:



whether the vegetation is in a **BUSHFIRE RISK** area



the **VOLTAGE** of the conductor



the **SWING** and **SAG** of the conductor



whether the line is **INSULATED** or **BARE**

### BUSHFIRE RISK AREA

### NON-BUSHFIRE RISK AREA

## Trees and powerlines

**CONTACT BETWEEN POWERLINES AND TREE BRANCHES** can occur due to a number of reasons such as strong winds and falling trees. This contact can potentially damage the powerlines causing the risk of electric shock, fire or supply interruptions.

## Why do we prune vegetation?

While we recognise the value of trees in our community, we need to manage trees near powerlines to:

- Ensure **PUBLIC SAFETY**
- Mitigate **BUSHFIRE RISK**
- Maintain **RELIABILITY** of electricity supply

## Minimising environmental impact

SA Power Networks aims to balance community expectations regarding visual and environmental considerations and our compliance with legislated vegetation clearances. Here's what we're doing:

Promoting the planting of **SUITABLE SPECIES** under or near powerlines

**IMPROVED PROTECTION** for the network which may include insulating powerlines, undergrounding powerlines or a program that includes tree removal and/or replacement

### CLEARANCE ZONE

The minimum safe distance of vegetation from powerlines, allowing the lines to safely swing in windy conditions without being damaged or starting fires. SA Power Networks is legally obliged to keep this zone free of vegetation.

### BUFFER ZONE

The additional area beyond a Clearance Zone in bushfire risk areas to allow for tree growth/regrowth and movement in windy conditions. It ensures that the vegetation does not grow, regrow or bend into the 'clearance zone' around the power line.

### REGROWTH ZONE

The area around a Clearance Zone in a non-bushfire risk area. It indicates the extent to which vegetation can be trimmed.

P Clearance at pole

## More information

If you require more information about the pruning activity in your area, please contact our **Customer Response** team during business hours on 13 12 61 or by email at [customerrelations@sapowernetworks.com.au](mailto:customerrelations@sapowernetworks.com.au). More information can also be found in the Office of the Technical Regulator **Trees and powerlines** document.

For more information on the **TYPES OF TREES** you can plant near or under powerlines, refer to the Botanic Gardens plant selector tool here: [plantselector.botanicgardens.sa.gov.au](http://plantselector.botanicgardens.sa.gov.au)