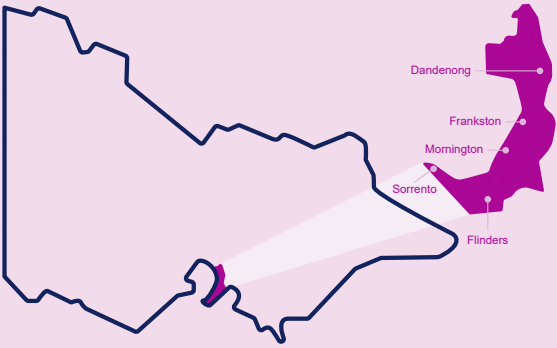


Your Private Electric Lines

united energy



About United Energy

United Energy (UE) moves electricity to and from more than 710,000 homes and businesses Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs and the Mornington Peninsula.

Our network is made up of more than 13,700 kilometres of wires, almost 204,000 poles and associated infrastructure.

Our key areas of focus are managing any vegetation around powerlines, extensive asset inspection and maintenance programs and helping customers manage any privately-owned electric lines. Overhead electric lines that aren't inspected and properly maintained can result in a serious bushfire or safety hazard.

This brochure outlines your responsibilities as a landowner with a Private Electric Line (PEL) and our responsibilities as your electricity distributor.

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Private electric lines: a shared responsibility

Bushfires impact the things we care about – our communities, our homes, our businesses, liveability and our environment. While it is not possible to completely eliminate bushfires, by working together to reduce the factors that contribute to bushfire risk, we can limit the instances of bushfire starts.

Our responsibilities as your distributor

United Energy will inspect your PEL for major defects every three years in high bushfire risk areas and every five years in low bushfire risk areas.

If your PEL is found to be defective, you will be advised to carry out necessary repairs. If the defects have not been repaired in the allocated timeframe, your electricity supply will likely be disconnected on days of a Total Fire Ban.

Your electricity supply will not be reconnected until the severe fire weather abates or it's the end of the Total Fire Ban Day and charges may apply.

In addition to these scheduled inspections, your PEL may be inspected by us at any time. If a dangerous situation is discovered, we can disconnect electricity supply without prior notice to ensure electrical safety. Our inspection will not reduce the need for you to inspect and arrange necessary repairs and maintenance.

Your responsibilities as a property owner

It is your responsibility to maintain your PEL which includes the associated poles and other electrical equipment at your property.

As part of this maintenance, we recommend you regularly inspect your PEL, ensuring they are well maintained and clear of trees and branches.

This maintenance will reduce the possibility of power supply failures, electrocution, or fires. We strongly recommend you inspect your PEL at least every six months.

Why you should keep your PEL well maintained

The most obvious reason is to ensure a safe supply of power to your property. If injury or property damage occurs due to a lack of maintenance, you could be held liable, resulting in possible litigation.



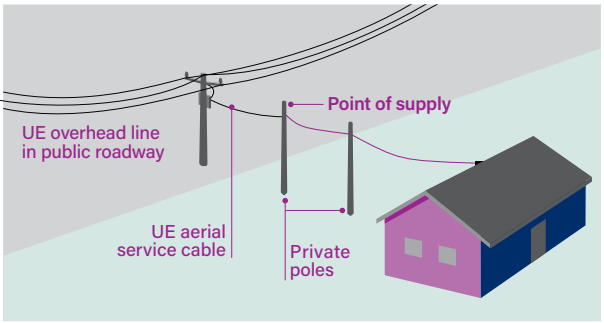
Which are your powerlines and which are United Energy's?

Please refer to the diagrams on pages 8–13 for a clear understanding of the different types of powerlines. It's important to note that all high voltage lines are owned and managed by United Energy, even if they cross your property. For both your personal safety and the safety of the network, please do not attempt any maintenance of high voltage lines.

If you are not sure whether your line is a PEL or a high voltage line, please contact us on 1300 131 689.

Which situation applies to you?

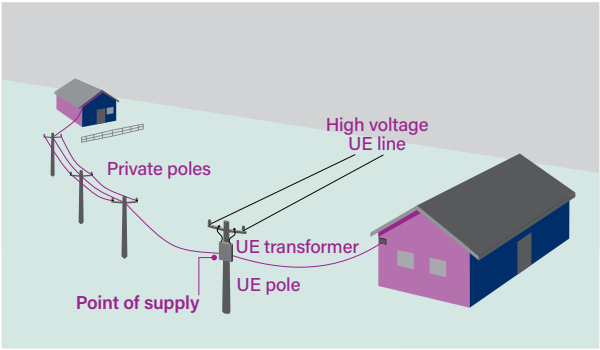
Figure 1



In Figure 1, the UE 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.

- **From the point of supply:** vegetation clearance and maintenance are your responsibility.
- **UE's aerial service cable**: maintenance and vegetation clearance on the public roadway is UE's or the local municipality's responsibility. The tree trimming on your property under the aerial service cable is your responsibility.

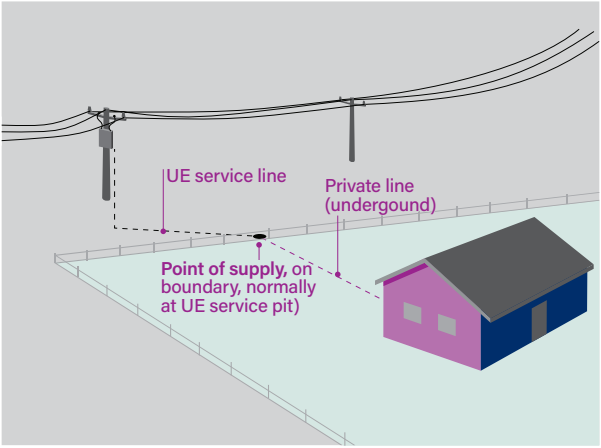
Figure 2



In Figure 2, UE's overhead line is on private land (UE's lines may have a transformer fitted near your building). The point of supply is where your lines are connected to a UE pole.

- **From the point of supply:** vegetation clearance and maintenance are your responsibility.
- **High voltage UE lines (attached above to the UE transformer):** vegetation clearance and maintenance are UE's responsibility.

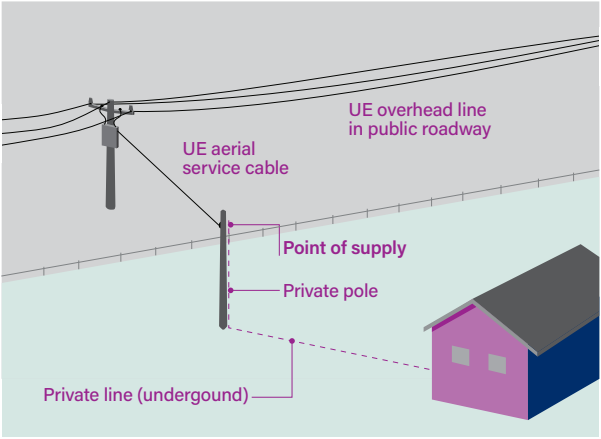
Figure 3



In Figure 3, the underground cable from UE overhead lines is in a public roadway. The point of supply is where the cable crosses your property boundary.

- **From your property boundary:** maintenance is your responsibility.
- **From the roadway to your property boundary:** maintenance is UE's responsibility.

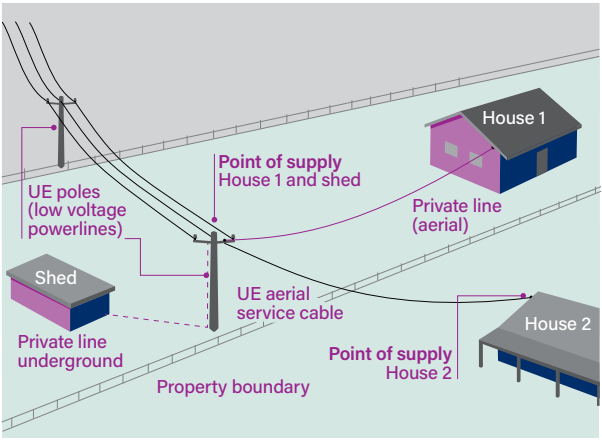
Figure 4



In Figure 4, the UE overhead line is located within the public roadway. The aerial service cable is carried to a pole on private land. It then changes to an underground cable. The point of supply is where the overhead line is connected to the private pole.

- **From the point of supply:** maintenance is your responsibility.
- **From the roadway to the first pole:** maintenance and tree trimming in the public roadway is UE's or the local municipality's responsibility, however, vegetation clearance on your property under the aerial service cable is your responsibility.

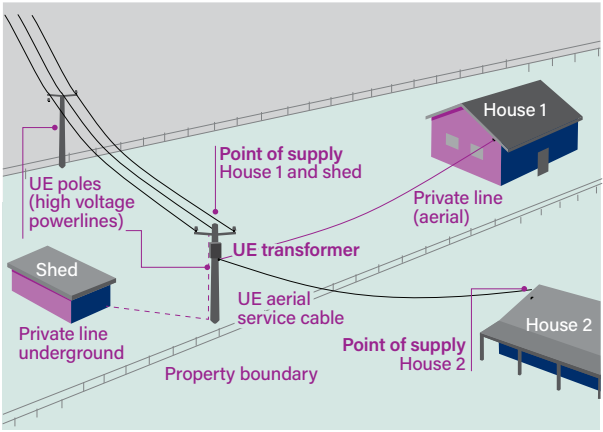
Figure 5



In Figure 5, the UE aerial service cable is on private land. The point of supply for the first house (and shed) is where the private lines are connected to the UE pole. However, the second house is situated across a property boundary, therefore a UE aerial service cable is connected straight to the second house. The point of supply is where the UE aerial service cable is connected to the second house.

- **From the UE pole to the first house and to the shed:** maintenance and vegetation clearance are your responsibility.
- **From the roadway to the second house:** maintenance is UE's responsibility and vegetation clearance is UE's responsibility up to the property boundary only.

Figure 6



In Figure 5, the UE powerline is a low voltage line and in Figure 6, the UE powerline is a high voltage line with a transformer fitted. The same rules apply:

- **From the UE pole to the first house and to the shed:** maintenance and vegetation clearance are your responsibility.
- **From the roadway to the second house:** maintenance is UE's responsibility and vegetation clearance is UE's responsibility up to the property boundary only.

How to look after your powerlines

1. Inspecting your PEL

UE strongly recommends you inspect your PEL at least every six months. You can use binoculars or a telescope to inspect cable insulation (the covering) from the ground. If you are not comfortable inspecting the lines yourself, a list of Registered Electrical Contractors is available on the Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) website: energysafe.vic.gov.au.

WARNING:
Under no circumstances should you climb a pole or approach the powerlines yourself. Contact with live wires can be deadly, and tree branches touching lines may also be live. Repairs should always be carried out by a Registered Electrical Contractor.

2. Keep trees clear of powerlines

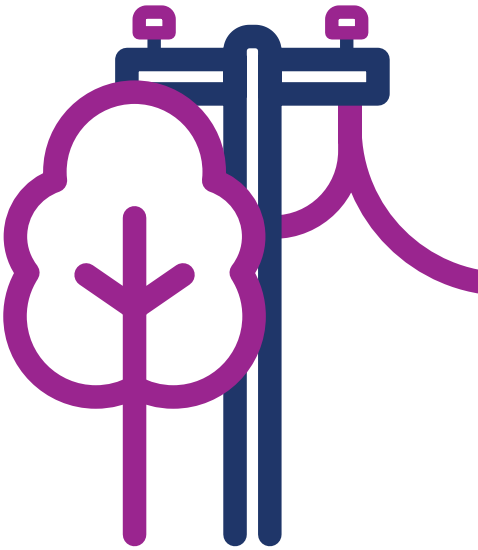
For trees near powerlines, advice should be sought from UE's customer service desk on 1300 131 689 before you attempt to remove or trim them.

PELs can be damaged by contact with trees and overhead limbs. Falling branches may cause the lines to clash or fall to the ground, causing a significant safety risk.

The exact minimum vegetation clearance space required is dependant on whether your PEL is insulated/uninsulated or is located within a low or hazardous bushfire risk area

All vegetation clearances are contained in the current Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations. Scan the QR code to view these details.

For more information visit: **energysafe.vic.gov.au**.

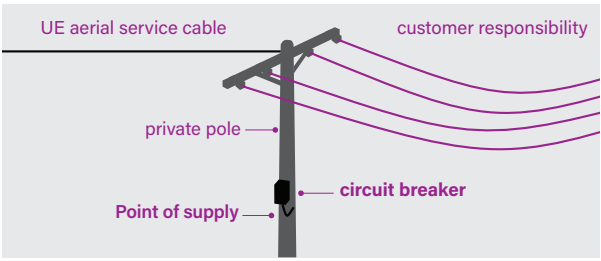


Council permits

If tree pruning is necessary and your property is in an area where a council planning permit is required before you cut a tree, you will need to comply with these council regulations, unless UE serves written notice that urgent tree pruning is required.

Circuit breakers

Existing overhead private electric powerlines



When a Registered Electrical Contractor carries out maintenance other than vegetation clearing on your PEL, a circuit breaker must be fitted at your point of supply. A circuit breaker is a switch installed at the start of your PEL to switch off power whenever necessary. The circuit breaker will 'trip' (switch off automatically) under the same conditions as a fuse would blow.

For more information visit **energysafe.vic.gov.au**.

Underground powerlines are a better choice

Should your PEL be in a hazardous bushfire risk area (HBRA) and need substantial repair, you will be directed by United Energy & Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) to replace them with an underground cable, in accordance with the Electricity Safety (General) Regulations 2019, available from the ESV website: **energysafe.vic.gov.au**.

An underground cable is far safer than an overhead powerline. It substantially reduces the risk of starting a bushfire and minimises the danger of electrocution through contact with tractors and other farm equipment. Underground cables are also more reliable and are not damaged by storms or weather. Overhead powerlines continually need maintenance, whereas underground cables require very little maintenance and no vegetation clearance.

For further information on underground powerlines, please contact your Registered Electrical Contractor or UE's customer service desk on **1300 131 689**.

Legal responsibility

Electricity customers have always been responsible by law for their private powerlines, either overhead or underground.

The Electricity Safety Act (1998) (Vic) (section 3) clearly defines:

- Private Electric Lines (PEL's)
- Point of supply (the point where your responsibility begins).

The Electricity Safety Act (1998) (Vic) confirms your responsibility for maintenance of your PEL, including the need to keep vegetation clear.

The Electricity Safety (Bushfire Mitigation) Regulations 2023 (Regulation 12) specifies minimum clearance of private electric lines

You should also refer to the Victorian Electricity Supply Industry (VESI) Services and Installation Rules for construction and maintenance of PEL's.

These are available at **victoriansir.org.au**

In accordance with the relevant regulations, all electrical wiring work associated with the erection and maintenance of PEL's should be carried out by a Registered Electrical Contractor. The Contractor must provide you with a copy of a Certificate of Electrical Safety if any repairs or alterations are made to your PEL.

You can also consult Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) for advice or clarification of your responsibilities on **(03) 9203 9700** or online at **www.esv.vic.gov.au**

For more information:

unitedenergy.com.au
1300 131 689 (general enquiries)
132 099 (faults & emergencies)
info@unitednergy.com.au

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