

Process Overview

Biosecurity Risk Management



Environmental
Services

Audience: External stakeholders that take or have an interest in how Essential Energy is meeting its biosecurity obligations. .

This process overview explains the steps Essential Energy staff and contractors take in managing biosecurity risks in the planning, scheduling and execution of field based work.

Essential Energy recognises that managing biosecurity is a responsibility shared between the government, industry, land occupiers, natural resource managers and the community. Although Essential Energy has the right to access its electricity network infrastructure under the *Electricity Supply Act 1995*, we are committed to working with land occupiers to meet our duty under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* to prevent, eliminate or minimise biosecurity risk **so far as is reasonably practicable**.

Essential Energy's approach to biosecurity risk management is therefore focused on engagement with land occupiers to capture information about specific biosecurity risks related to their properties. This information, combined with information from other sources such as government land use mapping, will be used to assign a risk rating (high, medium or low) to each property. This risk rating will determine the procedures that should be followed when accessing a property to manage the risk of Essential Energy spreading pests, diseases, and weeds.

Engagement with land occupiers

Notification letters to land occupiers on upcoming inspections or planned works are to include a section requesting that the land occupier inform Essential Energy, or contractors engaged to undertake works on Essential Energy's behalf, of any specific biosecurity concerns related to their property. This information is captured in Essential Energy's information systems (and/or those of the relevant contractor) and is available for staff and contractors to reference when planning and executing inspections or planned works.

Biosecurity Risk Rating

Properties will be assigned a biosecurity risk rating based on an assessment of the degree of risk known to be present (if any). The guidelines shown in **Table 1** will be applied when performing this assessment.

Table 1: Biosecurity risk ratings

Risk Rating	Examples
High Risk	Properties subject to a control order, quarantined properties.
Medium Risk	Intensive animal production properties, known weed-infested properties, other properties where land occupier has notified Essential Energy of a valid biosecurity concern.
Low Risk	All other properties. No known risk, but, as always, the potential exists and access should be undertaken with caution.

The high and medium biosecurity risk rating will be assigned to each property where Essential Energy or its contractors are aware of a specific risk, which will enable staff and contractors to access known information when planning work on the property.

Biosecurity zones and control zones

Biosecurity zones and control zones are broad areas where certain actions must be taken to comply with regulatory requirements developed to manage an ongoing key biosecurity risk. For example, the Queensland Fruit Fly Control Zone covers an area of the Murray-Darling basin renowned for intensive fruit production. Movement of host fruits into the control zone is prohibited in order to reduce the risk of Queensland Fruit Fly impacting horticulture in the region.

The Biosecurity Zone dataset in Essential Energy’s Smallworld system shows staff where key biosecurity zones and control zones have been created, and the management actions they require. Contractors engaged to undertake works on Essential Energy’s behalf are expected to obtain details about any biosecurity zones and control zones in a proposed work area from the NSW Department of Primary Industries, or alternatively may request spatial data from Essential Energy.

General work planning guidelines

- Refer to ‘Biosecurity Risk’ and ‘Biosecurity Zone’ data when planning works.
- Once the biosecurity risk rating of the property is identified from the Biosecurity Risk data, follow the relevant biosecurity risk management guidelines in **Table 3**.
- If the property is situated within a biosecurity zone or control zone, ensure compliance with the relevant actions specified in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Biosecurity risk management guidelines

Risk Rating	Planned Work Guidelines	Emergency Work Guidelines
High Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with quarantine and biosecurity signage. • Avoid animal holding areas where possible. • Close gates and repair fences where necessary. • Clean down vehicles and equipment after works. • Where practical, conduct works on high risk properties last on a given day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with quarantine and biosecurity signage. • Avoid animal holding areas where possible. • Close gates and repair fences where necessary. • Clean down vehicles and equipment as soon as practicable after shift.
Medium Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close gates and repair fences where necessary. • Clean down vehicles and equipment that come into contact with weeds, pests or disease before accessing a non-infested property. For weeds, in dry conditions, brush down or air blowing may be sufficient. • Where practical, conduct works on medium risk properties last on a given day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close gates and repair fences where necessary. • Clean down vehicles and equipment that come into contact with weeds, pests or disease as soon as practicable after shift.
Low Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close gates and repair fences where necessary. • Assess the property for the presence of weeds, pests or diseases, and, if present, consider options for managing risk of spreading (e.g. clean down if vehicles or equipment are carrying seed material). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close gates and repair fences where necessary. • Clean down vehicles and equipment that come into contact with weeds, pests or disease as soon as practicable after shift.

General guidelines where agreement with land occupier is difficult to reach

Although Essential Energy has the right to access its electricity network infrastructure under the *Electricity Supply Act 1995*, we are committed to working with land occupiers to meet our duty under the

Biosecurity Act 2015. Consent to enter a property should be sought from the occupier wherever it is reasonably practicable to do so. In situations where agreement with the occupier cannot be reached on the spot, staff or contractors should refrain from entering the property, and escalate the matter to a supervisor who may take over consultation with the occupier and/or issue a notice of entry.

General guidelines for minimising the spread of weeds and diseases

- Drive on existing roads and tracks wherever possible.
- Avoid or minimise driving through weed infested areas, especially when wet (more seed material will adhere to vehicle in wet conditions).
- Schedule works to minimise biosecurity risks (e.g. avoid sensitive properties at times when weed seeds are abundant).
- Regularly clean down vehicles and equipment, particularly after working in high risk areas.

General clean down guidelines

When to clean down

- After working in a high biosecurity risk area.
- When moving from a contaminated medium or low biosecurity risk area to a clean area if vehicle or equipment is contaminated.
- When requested by a government officer.
- When required by conditions of an emergency order, control order, biosecurity zone or quarantine area.
- When moving from one geographic region to another (e.g. from east to west of Great Dividing Range).
- When reasonable and practicable to do so in response to a land occupier request, where clean down facilities are provided.

How to clean down

- In dry conditions, and where the risk is related to weeds, brush down or air blowing may be sufficient to remove the seed load from a vehicle.
- Where wet/muddy conditions have been encountered, or the risk is related to pests or diseases, clean down with high pressure/low flow or low pressure/high flow water may be required.
- Clean vehicles, trailers, plant and equipment thoroughly. On vehicles, pay particular attention to the underside (including chassis rails) and mudguards, as research shows that these locations commonly contain much of the seed load carried by a vehicle. Also target the engine, radiator, running boards, bull bar, spare wheel, wheel arches, wheels and tyres, which are also known to commonly harbor significant seed loads.
- Where water clean down is required, and where reasonably practicable, clean down vehicles, trailers and plant at a designated Essential Energy or public clean down facility, or at a clean down bay provided by a land occupier.
- Clean interior footwells, where seeds are commonly deposited from the soles of work boots. A dust pan and brush may be effective for many vehicles. Where longer pile carpet or mats are present, a vacuum may be required. Any seed material removed should be bagged and disposed of.
- Check and clean boots, clothing and tools as required. Pay particular attention to boots and socks, and any tools sporting clumps of attached mud or dirt.