

# Don't wing it with powerlines



Powerlines can pose a safety risk for recreational and general aviation pilots involved in low level flying.

Whether you're involved in aerial application, recreational flying or other aerial activities there are some things you need to know before you fly.

## Reading the electricity network from above

Powerlines have configurations that range from multiple high voltage wires supported on large towers to a single wire earth return (SWER) system. The SWER system can be strung in spans of up to 400 metres and can be difficult to see.



Buildings such as houses and sheds are likely to have power connected through overhead structures. Roads may provide a convenient corridor for powerlines and by identifying at least two poles, pilots can gauge the path of the wire.

Crossarms attached to poles generally face in the same direction as the wire and may also assist in identifying the number of wires and their direction.

## Planning low level operations

To assist with flight planning and identifying potential hazards, download the Look up and Live app.

Look Up and Live has made overhead powerline locations and imagery available to the public online, at no cost, via an interactive geospatial map.

The app provides the ability to search locations in real time and to overlay maps with third party mapping programs, or print, as required.

Visit [essentialenergy.com.au/lookupandlive](https://essentialenergy.com.au/lookupandlive)

## Planning work near powerlines?

Before you get onsite, check the location of powerlines with the free Look Up and Live app.



# Look up and Live

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It's also important to:

- ▶ Discuss powerline locations with property owners
- ▶ Remember that poles, crossarms and stay wires may help in identifying the presence of overhead wires
- ▶ Cross over powerlines at poles or structures rather than mid-span where possible
- ▶ Look out for indicators of possible damage to the network infrastructure such as reduced powerline height, uneven cables, excessive sag, or slack stays - please report damaged powerlines immediately on **13 20 80**.

## If contact with powerlines occurs

- ▶ Immediately cut off fuel supply - the danger of electrical accidents is complicated by the presence of fuel, and consequent danger of fire due to arc flashes igniting spilt fuel
- ▶ Do not touch overhead or fallen powerlines or anything in contact with them
- ▶ Assume the wires are live, even if they are not sparking
- ▶ Get the power turned off. Call triple zero (000) immediately and ask the first emergency authority to report powerlines down and a life-threatening situation
- ▶ If you are in a grounded aircraft or vehicle, and it is safe to do so, stay inside the cabin. Do not leave the cabin until the power is switched off and you have been given the all clear by an Authorised Essential Energy employee
- ▶ Stay eight metres away from fallen powerlines or anything in contact with the wire. Advise

bystanders to do the same. The current may travel a significant distance through the ground and even further if the wire has fallen on a metal fence or metal object.

## If immediate evacuation is necessary

- ▶ Jump well clear ensuring you don't touch the aircraft or vehicle and the ground at the same time. Land with your feet together, and then hop or shuffle away with your feet together until you are at least eight metres clear of the aircraft, vehicle, powerlines or anything else in contact with the network
- ▶ Do not attempt to rescue, or allow others to approach an aircraft or vehicle that is in contact with the electrical network.

## Powerline markers

Powerline markers are available for purchase but must be fitted by Essential Energy. They are not suitable for licensed airstrips.



For enquiries about our Aerial Marker Program, visit [essentialenergy.com.au/aerialmarkers](https://essentialenergy.com.au/aerialmarkers)

## RECOMMENDATION

Essential Energy recommends you familiarise yourself with the latest SafeWork NSW Code of Practice 'Work near Overhead Powerlines' which can be viewed at [safework.nsw.gov.au](https://safework.nsw.gov.au) or you can purchase a copy of the Code of Practice by contacting **SafeWork NSW** on **13 10 50**.

For more information, visit [essentialenergy.com.au/safety/aviation-safety](https://essentialenergy.com.au/safety/aviation-safety)