

# Fire safety near powerlines

- > **Be safe. Fires near powerlines can be dangerous. If fire is threatening property or lives, contact the Emergency Services on 000**
- > **Report all fires burning underneath or near powerlines by calling 13 20 80**
- > **Notify Essential Energy before undertaking any fire related activity near powerlines by calling 13 20 80.**

## Safety advice for fires near powerlines

For your safety, when there is a fire close to a powerline remember:

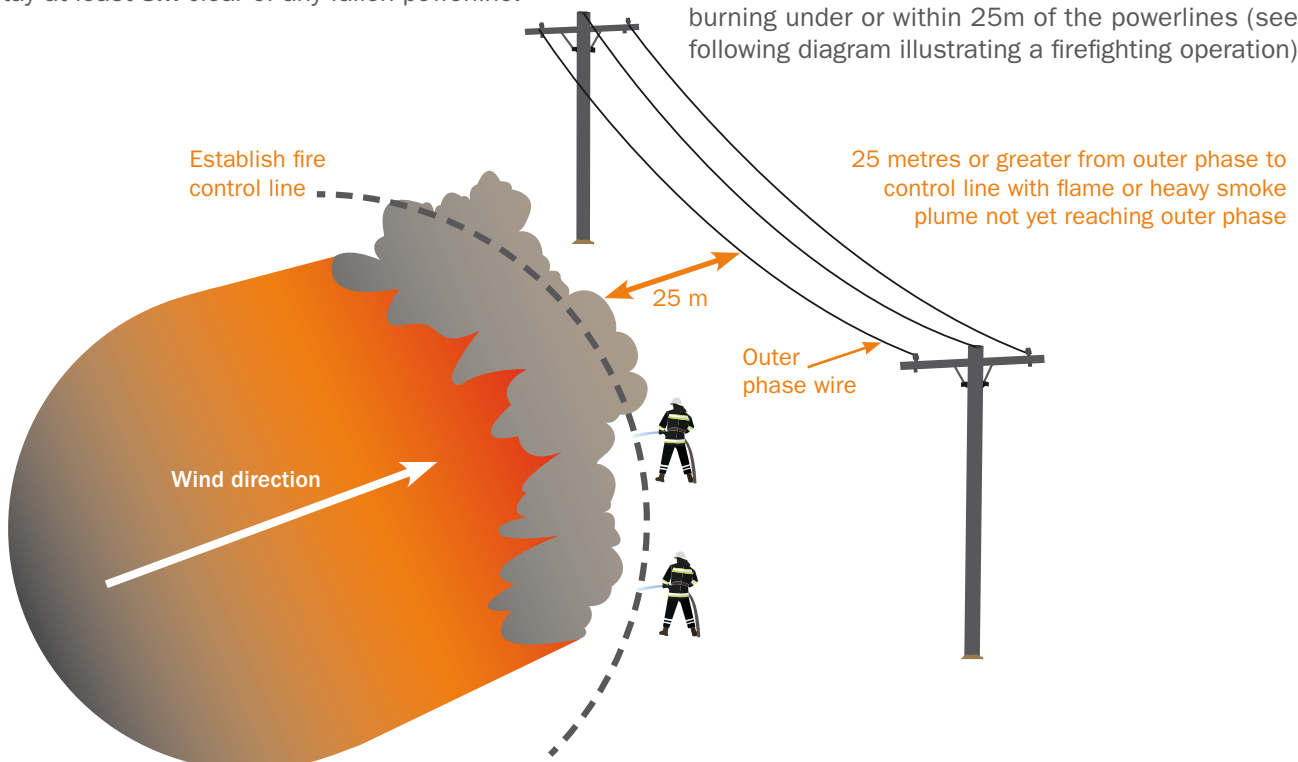
- Keep personnel, vehicles and attachments at least 25m from the powerline
- Electricity, especially at high voltages, can 'jump' across several metres of air gap. This means that direct contact with the high voltage powerline is not required to produce a potentially fatal event
- Smoke can act as a conductor. Fires burning on or near powerline easements can greatly increase the chances of a flashover occurring
- Powerlines can sag lower in times of high demand, high temperature and fires, reducing the ground clearance
- Don't stockpile, windrow or heap combustible material under high voltage powerlines
- Exercise caution if using powerline easements to access fire locations, as readymade firebreaks, as a break from which to commence back-burning operations, or as a refuge area in a firestorm
- Stay at least **8m** clear of any fallen powerline.

## Hazards

- Sagging powerlines due to failures or high temperature
- Wooden pole structures may fail causing powerlines to fall
- Flashover may occur between powerlines or from powerlines to the ground or structures through burning vegetation (this may be seen as a flash or heard as an explosion).

## Control measures

- Avoid the ash of any burnt power poles which may contain hazardous substances
- Do not directly attack fires in cleared areas beneath powerlines
- Do not spray water directly on or near powerlines or insulators from the ground or air
- Wait for fire to burn clear of the cleared areas beneath the powerlines before commencing a mop-up operation
- At all times treat the powerline as live until clearance has been given by Essential Energy personnel **ON SITE**
- At all times keep personnel and vehicles at a minimum of 25m clear of a headfire, or a flank fire burning under or within 25m of the powerlines (see following diagram illustrating a firefighting operation).



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## Important information

- Wherever possible, do not attempt to control fires near energised powerlines
- Where fire control activities (hazard reduction) are considered necessary from the cleared area under powerlines, early advice to Essential Energy will allow an assessment of risks associated with de-energising the powerline
- Approach no closer than 25m to the fire edge to conduct mop-up of grass fires. This may include the knockdown of low (less than 2m high) isolated flame/spots/smouldering logs which are not producing a convection column or heavy smoke plume
- If required to carry out mop-up activities:
  - never direct the hose stream onto the powerline
  - never direct the hose stream into a smoke plume that is near (less than 25m from) or reaching powerlines. Keep stream no higher than a person's head height
- never direct the hose stream at a burning bush or tree (more than head height) in a powerline easement
- Avoid the ash of any burnt power poles which may contain hazardous substances
- Bushes or trees burning in powerline easement present a real threat of creating a flashover to earth from powerlines - **KEEP AT LEAST 25m CLEAR**
- Always remain at least 8m from any fallen powerlines and call 000 to report the situation.

If a powerline falls on your vehicle, remain in the vehicle if safe to do so and call 000 immediately. If you do need to exit the vehicle, or you are outside the vehicle when the powerline falls, you must hop or shuffle with your feet together to a safe distance of at least 8m. To view our emergency escape procedure visit [essentialenergy.com.au/safety](https://essentialenergy.com.au/safety)

**If you have any safety questions call 13 23 91  
and speak to Essential Energy's Public Safety Team or  
go to [essentialenergy.com.au/safety](https://essentialenergy.com.au/safety)**