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Electric Line Clearance Management Plan

Victorian Rail Track (VicTrack)

Property Group

Document information

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1. Introduction

VicTrack is a state-owned organisation with an independent Board that oversees our performance. We are the custodial owners of Victoria's transport assets, but we only operate a small amount of selected assets. We report to the Treasurer, the Minister for Transport Infrastructure and the Minister for Public Transport.

Electric Line networks for tram and metropolitan and regional train services are leased to the Head, Transport for Victoria (assisted by the Department of Transport and Planning). The Head, Transport for Victoria in turn operates or releases assets for the operation of public transport services via agreements with transport operators.

The agreements determine the allocation of transport assets to transport operators:- Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), Metro Trains Melbourne, V/Line and Yarra Trams who deliver public transport services and manage the assets. Assets not in use for transport remain under VicTrack's management.

The *Electricity Safety Act 1998* (The Act) Subdivision 1 Section 84D defines VicTrack as a responsible person and sets the requirement to keep trees clear of electric lines. The Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020 Part 2 9(2) and 9(4) sets the requirement for VicTrack to prepare this plan and prescribes the specifications.

This Electric Line Clearance Management Plan (ELCMP) defines the plan and processes to be used by VicTrack staff and Contractors to manage and maintain vegetation compliance around Electric Lines that are the responsibility of VicTrack. The program and this plan are required to be reviewed annually to identify opportunities for improved compliance and efficiencies.

VicTrack's Electric Line Asset Register only contains Low Voltage (LV) Private Overhead Electric Lines (POELs). All of our POELs are expected to be insulated cables, however this plan will contain information for Bare wires in case an unforeseen asset is identified during our initial Electric Line vegetation inspection.

2. Scope

The scope of works for this ELCMP is to inspect, manage and maintain clearance of vegetation from VicTrack's POELs in accordance with the *Electricity Safety Act 1998* and Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020. This includes the notification, consultation and negotiation with affected persons and management of important vegetation and maintaining the health and aesthetics of affected trees.

Who this plan is applicable to

This procedure applies to all VicTrack employees, contractors or consultants employed by or working on behalf of VicTrack Property Group for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

What this procedure is applicable to

This procedure applies to:

- all VicTrack land and properties that are not leased in the State of Victoria
- VicTrack vacant land in the State of Victoria that carries a Private Overhead Electric Line (POEL) with a service or function for which VicTrack is responsible. This may be within or outside of the operational rail corridor. POELs are located along rail corridors throughout Victoria as shown in Appendix 17.12 Network Map and Low Bushfire Risk Area (LBRA) example.

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This procedure does not apply to:

- assets that have been leased to Head, Transport for Victoria and then onto a Rail Operator under an appropriate agreement
- VicTrack vacant land that carries a (POEL) with a service or function for which VicTrack is not responsible.

When this procedure is relevant or applicable

This procedure is relevant:

- Compliance is required at all times. The risk of a fire starting as a result of vegetation interaction with our POELs is greater during the CFA Declared Fire Season and in a Hazardous Bushfire Risk Area.

3. Definitions, abbreviations and acronyms

Definitions commonly used throughout this document:

Term	Definition
The Act	The Electricity Safety Act 1998
The Regulations	The Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020
HBRA	Hazardous Bushfire Risk Area
LBRA	Low Bushfire Risk Area
ELCMP	Electric Line Clearance Management Plan
Applicable Distance	The prescribed distance required to be maintained between vegetation and electric lines as specified by The Regulations. An extra distance allowance for sag and sway may be required.
Minimum Clearance Space	The Applicable Distance with an additional distance added to allow for sag and sway of the conductors.
Responsible Person	The person specified under section 5(4)(a) of this document.
Unsafe Situation	An unsafe situation may be either; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• an urgent tree or a failed Hazard Tree• a tree found inside or about to grow inside the Minimum Clearance Space• vegetation in the HBRA that may become non-compliant during the Declared Fire Season.
Suitably qualified arborist	an arborist who has:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• as a minimum, the qualification of National Certificate III in Arboriculture including the Perform a ground-based tree defect evaluation unit of competency, or an equivalent qualification• at least 3 years of field experience in assessing trees.

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4. Table of relevant regulation clauses of the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020

Ref No.	Requirement	Page No.
1	This regulation does not apply to a responsible person referred to in section 84A or 84B of the Act.	-
2	A responsible person that is not a major electricity company, before 31 March in each year, must prepare a management plan relating to compliance with the Code for the next financial year.	10
3	A responsible person that is a major electricity company, before 31 March 2023, must prepare, and submit to Energy Safe Victoria for approval a management plan relating to compliance with the Code for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2026.	10
4	A responsible person must ensure that a management plan prepared under sub regulation (2) or (3) specifies the following:	10
	(a) the name, address and telephone number of the responsible person	10
	(b) the name, position, address and telephone number of the individual who was responsible for the preparation of the management plan	10
	(c) the name, position, address and telephone number of the persons who are responsible for carrying out the management plan	11
	(d) the telephone number of a person who can be contacted in an emergency that requires clearance of a tree from an electric line that the responsible person is required to keep clear of trees	11
	(e) the objectives of the management plan	12
	(f) the land to which the management plan applies (as indicated on a map)	13
	(g) any High Bushfire Risk Areas (HBRA) and Low Bushfire Risk Areas (LBRA) in the land referred to in paragraph (f) (as indicated on the map)	13
	(h) each area that the responsible person knows contains a tree that the responsible person may need to cut or remove to ensure compliance with the Code and that is	14
	i. Indigenous to Victoria	14
	ii. listed in a planning scheme to be of ecological, historical or aesthetic significance	15
	iii. A tree of cultural or environmental significance	15
	(i) the means which the responsible person will use to identify a tree of a kind specified in paragraph (h)(i), (ii) or (iii)	17
	(j) the management procedures that the responsible person will adopt to ensure compliance with the Code, which:	18

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Ref No.	Requirement	Page No.
	i. includes details of the methods to be adopted for managing trees and maintaining a Minimum Clearance Space as required by the Code	32
	ii. for the purposes of determining a Minimum Clearance Space in accordance with Division 1 of Part 3 of the Code:	32
	(A) must specify the method for determining an additional distance that allows for conductor sag and sway	32
	(B) may provide for different additional distances to be determined for different parts of an electric line span	32
	(k) the procedures to be adopted if it is not practicable to comply with the requirements of AS 4373 while cutting a tree in accordance with the Code	32
	(l) A description of each alternative compliance mechanism in respect of which the responsible person has applied, or proposes to apply, for approval under clause 31 of the Code	34
	(m) The details of each approval for an alternative compliance mechanism	34
	(n) A description of the measures that must be used to assess the performance of the responsible person under the management plan	35
	(o) Details of the audit processes that must be used to determine the responsible person's compliance with the Code	37
	(p) The qualifications and experience that the responsible person must require of the persons who are to carry out the inspection, cutting or removal of trees in accordance with the Code	37
	(q) Notification and consultation procedures	39
	(r) a procedure for the independent resolution of disputes relating to electric line clearance	46
	(s) if Energy Safe Victoria has granted an exemption under regulation 11 relating to a requirement of the Code, details of the exemption or a copy of the exemption.	48
Obligations relating to the management plan		
1	This regulation applies in relation to the management plan that a responsible person is required to prepare under regulation 9.	48
2	The responsible person must provide a copy of the management plan to Energy Safe Victoria within 14 days after a written request from Energy Safe Victoria or such longer period as specified by Energy Safe Victoria in the written request.	48

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Ref No.	Requirement	Page No.
3	The responsible person, if requested in writing to do so by Energy Safe Victoria, must provide further information or material in respect of the management plan within 14 days after the written request or such longer period as specified by Energy Safe Victoria in the written request.	48
4	The responsible person must amend the management plan if instructed to do so in writing by Energy Safe Victoria within 14 days after the written instruction or such longer period as specified by Energy Safe Victoria in the written instruction.	49
5	The responsible person must not contravene a requirement of the management plan if the management plan is approved by Energy Safe Victoria.	49
6	The responsible person must ensure that a copy of the current management plan is published on the responsible person's website.	49
Exemptions		
1	Energy Safe Victoria may exempt a responsible person from any of the requirements of these Regulations subject to any conditions specified by Energy Safe Victoria.	49
2	A responsible person who is granted an exemption under this regulation must comply with the conditions (if any) of the exemption	49
Clearance responsibilities		
3	(1) A responsible person must ensure that, at all times, no part of a tree for which the person has clearance responsibilities is within the Minimum Clearance Space for an electric line span.	50
3	(2) Subclause (1) is subject to clauses 4, 5, 6 and 7.	50
4	Exception to Minimum Clearance Space for structural branches around insulated low voltage electric lines.	50
5	Exception to Minimum Clearance Space for small branches around insulated low voltage electric lines.	51
6	Exception to Minimum Clearance Space for small branches growing under uninsulated low voltage electric lines in low bushfire risk areas.	51
7	Exception to Minimum Clearance Space for structural branches around uninsulated low voltage electric lines in Low Bushfire Risk Areas.	53
9	Responsible person may cut or remove hazard tree.	54
10	Cutting of tree to comply with Standard (AS4373).	55
11	Cutting or removal of indigenous or significant trees must be minimised.	55
12	Cutting or removing habitat for threatened fauna.	55

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Ref No.	Requirement	Page No.
Clearance responsibilities – notification, consultation and dispute resolution		
16	Responsible person must provide notification before cutting or removing certain trees.	56
17	Responsible person must publish notice before cutting or removing certain trees.	56
Clearance responsibilities – additional duties of responsible persons		
20	Duty relating to the safety of cutting or removal of trees close to an electric line	56
	(2) An owner, operator or distribution company that is consulted by a Council under subclause (1) must provide advice to the Council on:	56
	(a) safe limits of approach to electric lines for cutting or removing the tree	56
	(b) safe methods for cutting or removing the tree.	56

5. Preparation of management plan

The following sections are numbered as per Regulation 9 of the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020.

2 - A responsible person that is not a major electricity company, before 31 March in each year, must prepare a management plan relating to compliance with the Code for the next financial year.

The responsible person named in (4b) is referred to in this document as the Executive General Manager Property Group. The Executive General Manager Property Group will ensure that VicTrack's ELCMP for the next period between 1st July and 30 June is prepared before 31 March each year. The Plan is to be available and provided to ESV within 14 days of any request. Refer to Appendix 17.1 ECLMP-001 for ELCMP Review Process to ensure the ELCMP is amended and internally authorised before 31 March each year.

3 - A responsible person that is a major electricity company, before 31 March 2023, must prepare and submit to Energy Safe Victoria for approval a management plan relating to compliance with the Code for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2026.

Sub Regulation 3 refers to major electricity companies' requirements and does not apply to this plan.

4 - A responsible person must ensure that a management plan prepared under sub regulation (2) or (3) specifies the following:

(a) the name, address and telephone number of the responsible person

Name of entity:	Victorian Rail Track (VicTrack)
Address:	Level 8, 1010 Latrobe Street Docklands Vic 3008
Chief Executive Officer:	Chris Olds
Telephone:	03 9619 1111

(b) the name, position, address and telephone number of the individual who was responsible for the preparation of the management plan

Name:	Andrew Santana
Position:	Executive General Manager Property Group
Address:	Level 8, 1010 Latrobe Street Docklands Vic 3008
Telephone:	03 9619 1111

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(c) the name, position, address and telephone number of the persons who are responsible for carrying out the management plan

The responsible person named in (4c) is referred to in this document as the Group Manager Infrastructure. The Group Manager Infrastructure is responsible for carrying out the management plan and managing and implementing the ELCMP associated processes and procedures.

Name:	David Rowley
Position (Group Manager Infrastructure):	Group Manager Infrastructure
Address:	Level 8, 1010 Latrobe Street Docklands Vic 3008
Telephone:	03 9619 1111

(d) the telephone number of a person who can be contacted in an emergency that requires clearance of a tree from an electric line that the responsible person is required to keep clear of trees

Contact	Details	Phone number
ARTC Network Controllers	Junee NSW:	02 6924 9802 (Albury–Somerton)
	Mile End SA	08 8217 4233 (Newport–Somerton including Melbourne Metro)
	ARTC Mile End SA	08 8217 4235 (Dimboola–Newport including Maroona–Portland)
Metro Trains Melbourne (MTM)	Metrol	03 9610 7205
	Electrol	03 9610 5222
	Faults	03 9619 2999
V/Line Control	Senior Train Controller	03 9619 1077
VicTrack	Group Manager Infrastructure	03 9619 1111
VicTrack	Network Management Centre (24hrs)	03 9619 1915
VicTrack	Customer Service	03 9619 1111

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(e) the objectives of the management plan

VicTrack is committed to maintaining the Minimum Clearance Space between the vegetation and electric lines as part of its responsibility and as set out in the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020. The following are our key objectives:

- Compliance with the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020 (The Regulations) and the and prescribed Code of Practice for electric line clearance (The Code)
- Electrical safety
- Minimise fire starts as a result of contact between vegetation and electricity network
- Continuity of electricity supply to VicTrack assets
- Public safety
- Provision of a safe workplace for employees and service providers
- Vegetation management systems to maximise environment and amenity value of impacted trees
- Ensure areas of important vegetation which may be deemed as such, based on those areas containing botanically, historically or culturally important vegetation or vegetation of outstanding aesthetic or ecological significance, and/or the habitat or rare or endangered species
- Community satisfaction with the manner the necessary works required are carried out

VicTrack has developed a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to monitor the overall vegetation management performance. Relevant processes will be monitored and audited by the Group Manager Infrastructure to ensure that the objectives of the plan are being implemented and actioned. This will be done using the Objectives & KPIs Audit Appendix 17.3.

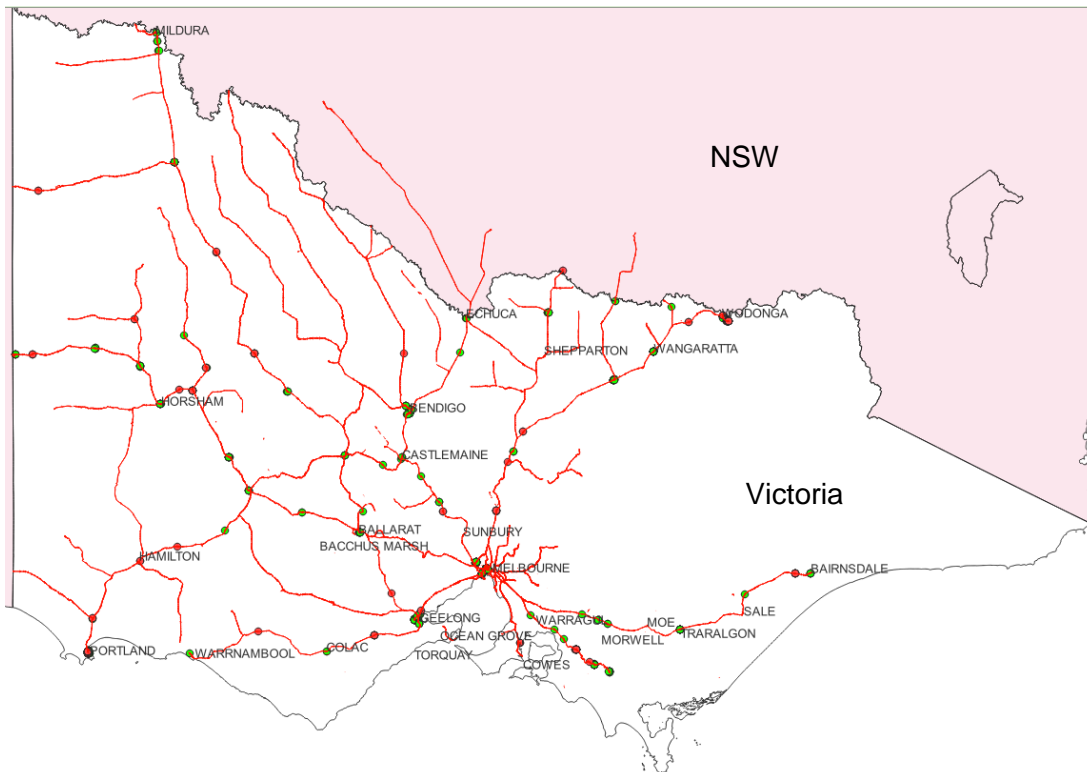
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(f) the land to which the management plan applies (as indicated on a map)

VicTrack corridors

In addition to the description in the scope, the rail land is shown with the VicTrack POELs in Map 1 below. There are 697 POEL poles that are restricted to isolated areas across the State of Victoria. Seventy-one per cent of the electric lines are servicing lights, and the remainder are feeding huts or buildings.

Map 1



VicTrack operates using map layers that were developed based on the official declared area maps <https://lineclearance.esv.vic.gov.au/>. The official declared area maps are to be used should clarification be needed.

(g) any hazardous bushfire risk areas and low bushfire risk areas in the land referred to in paragraph (f) (as indicated on the map)

Hazardous Bushfire Risk Areas (HBRA) and Low Bushfire Risk Areas (LBRA)

The CFA reviews and assigns Low Bushfire Risk Areas as prescribed by Section 80 of the *Electricity Safety Act 1998*. The updated maps are gazetted and made available to the public. The CFA website describes this process and provides public access to the shape file with a link to the latest data stored on Data Vic servers. The CFA website link is: <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/building-planning-regulations/electric-line-vegetation-clearance>.

The areas not identified by the CFA as Low Bushfire Risk Areas are classified as HBRA. This review is conducted annually and therefore boundaries can change regularly and the shapefiles must also be downloaded and reviewed annually.

The Executive General Manager Property Group person in 4c is responsible for obtaining and uploading this data each year to ensure the maps we use are current. This data is used for analysis and is made available to the Inspector via the field tablet. The layer outlining the Low Bushfire Risk Areas

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are stored in VicTrack's GIS system RailMap with an example in Appendix 17.12. The most recent shapefile data available at the time of this review is September 2021. An analysis of this data shows the 135 Poles are located in the HBRA and 562 in the LBRA, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Bushfire risk rating	Poles
HBRA	135
LBRA	562
Grand total	697

(h) each area that the responsible person knows contains a tree that the responsible person may need to cut or remove to ensure compliance with the Code and that is:

For trees defined within the following three categories; as far as practicable, VicTrack will not cut a tree more than is necessary to comply with the Regulations. We will not remove any of these trees unless it is required to ensure compliance or make an unsafe situation safe. We may remove one of these trees if a suitably qualified arborist has assessed the tree and advised trimming the tree would make the tree unhealthy or unviable. These conditions apply to all known trees that are identified here and any further trees that may be found to meet the criteria during the period of this plan.

The register, which records information regarding important vegetation is located and maintained for use by ELC personnel in a spreadsheet managed by the Manager Open Space and Recreation. This list contains all known sites and any additional trees that are identified will be added to this list.

All personnel are inducted into the Electric Line Clearance Management Plan as per Appendix 17.10, Induction checklist, and personnel are provided the following information.

i. Indigenous to Victoria:

VicTrack has a number of sites of Significant Native Vegetation, which are protected under legislation. The VicTrack Asset Information Management System has these trees recorded on land managed directly by VicTrack. None of these sites is known to be in the vicinity of our POEL poles.

We are in the process of collecting the tree species in the vicinity of our POELs. In the interim, all trees requiring to be cleared from our POELs will be identified to determine the species and reviewed against <https://vicflora.rbg.vic.gov.au/> to determine if the tree is indigenous to Victoria prior to pruning.

VicTrack will not cut a tree more than is necessary to comply with the Regulations. We will not remove any of these trees unless it is required to ensure compliance or make an unsafe situation safe. We may remove one of these trees if a suitably qualified arborist has assessed the tree and advised trimming the tree would make the tree unhealthy or unviable.

All trees identified are to be recorded and the data is to be maintained for future reference on VicTrack's RailMap system. At the end of the program, all data collected is to be kept for future use.

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ii. listed in a planning scheme to be of ecological, historical or aesthetic significance

A desktop review has been conducted at all POEL sites and there are no known trees of ecological, historical or aesthetic significance at these locations. Should any trees be identified in the future, the data will be maintained on VicTrack's RailMap system and maintained for future use.

VicTrack will not cut a tree more than is necessary to comply with the Regulations. We will not remove any of these trees unless it is required to ensure compliance or make an unsafe situation safe. We may remove one of these trees if a suitably qualified arborist has assessed the tree and advised trimming the tree would make the tree unhealthy or unviable.

iii. A tree of cultural or environmental significance:

A desktop review has been conducted at all POEL sites and there are 111 poles in environmentally sensitive areas. The desktop review also shows no known trees of cultural or environmental significance at these locations. Should any trees be identified in the future, the data will be maintained on VicTrack's RailMap system and maintained for future use.

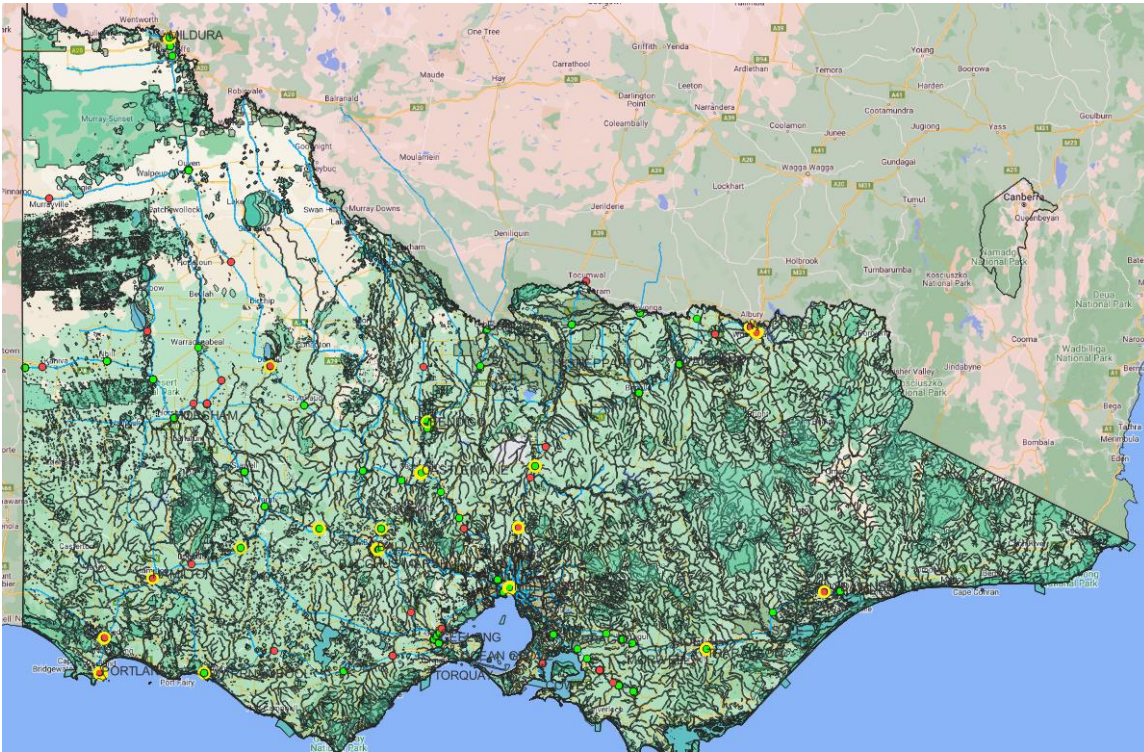
A map of Victoria and an example map showing the of Areas of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity and VicTrack poles is shown in the Maps 2 and 3 below. The location data will be provided to inspectors and the requirements set out above will be covered in inductions and outworked in the field.

VicTrack will not cut a tree more than is necessary to comply with the Regulations. We will not remove any of these trees unless it is required to ensure compliance or make an unsafe situation safe. We may remove one of these trees if a suitably qualified arborist has assessed the tree and advised trimming the tree would make the tree unhealthy or unviable.

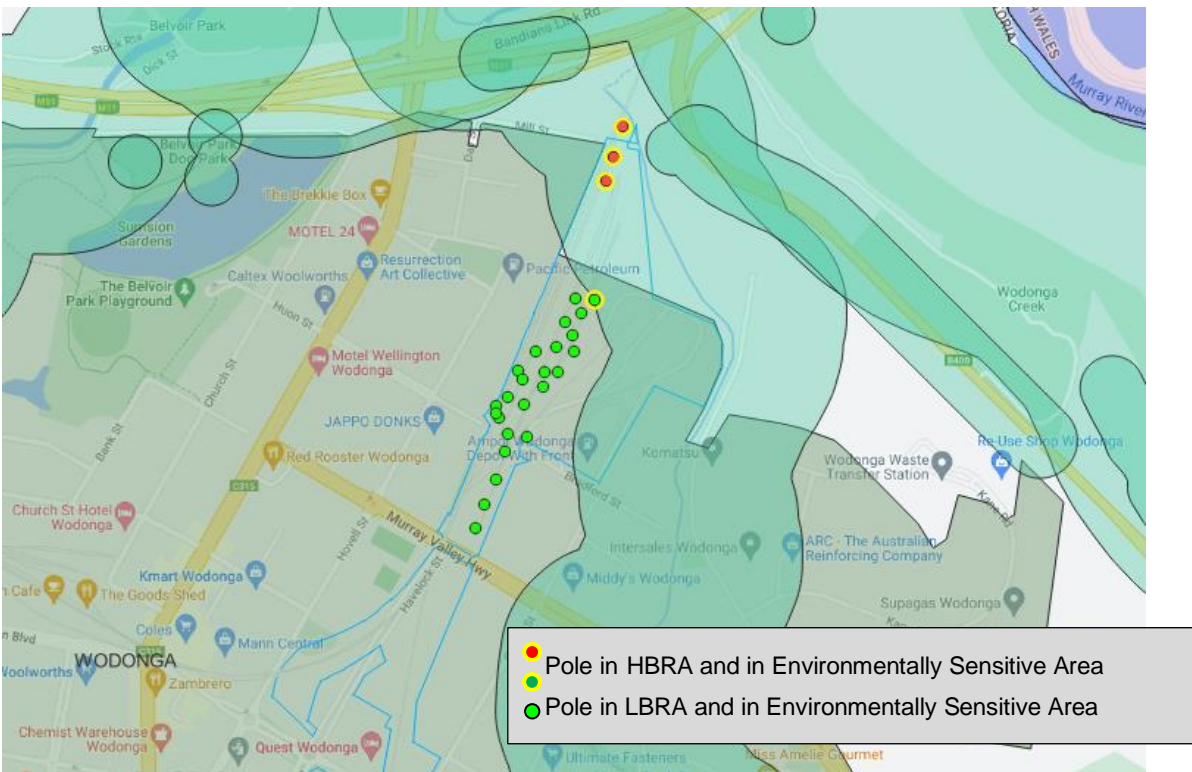
Table 2

Bushfire risk rating	Poles	Poles in Environmentally Sensitive Areas
HBRA	135	26
LBRA	562	85
Grand total	697	111

Map 2



Map 3



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(i) the means which the responsible person will use to identify a tree of a kind specified in paragraph (h), (i), (ii) or (iii)

Section (h) of this Plan will be reviewed and updated annually using the following resources. Maps will be checked and updated if required. Our inspection resources will be provided with the relevant maps as shown in Map 2 and advised to minimise the impact on indigenous vegetation.

If an old mature indigenous plant is not already on our system and it is recorded to be cleared, our field staff are to contact the Group Manager Infrastructure listed in 4c to see if there are any site indicators that a tree may have significance. No clearing work is to be carried out until this review is completed unless the tree needs to be cleared to maintain compliance.

If there is uncertainty of the significance of the tree, the tree will be assessed and identified by a suitably qualified arborist with knowledge of indigenous, native and exotic trees. VicTrack staff also refer to maps detailed in section (h) and the relevant planning overlays and GIS to ensure that minimal impact is made in areas of cultural, historical, botanical, ecological or habitat significance for rare or endangered species.

The Executive General Manager Property Group will review the following resources at least annually to ensure the accuracy of VicTrack's knowledge on the location of such trees:

- Ongoing review and identification of trees by VicTrack's staff
- Council planning scheme overlay for historical, cultural, environmental or aesthetic significance
- Register of significant trees; <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/schemes-and-amendments/browse-planning-schemes>
- Heritage Register (<http://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/>) within the meaning of the *Heritage Act 2017*
- VicTrack will be notified by Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council of any changes to the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register. The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register is not a publicly accessible register because it contains culturally sensitive information. Applicants may apply online for access or advice using the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System (ACHRIS - <https://achris.vic.gov.au/#/dashboard>) established under section 144 of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*
- Threatened Flora and Fauna List in accordance with section 10 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/conserving-threatened-species/threatened-list>
- The Flora or fauna as listed as threatened with a status of 'vulnerable,' 'endangered' or 'critically endangered' as per the EPBC Act List of Threatened Flora and List of Threatened Fauna. <https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicthreatenedlist.pl>

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(j) the management procedures that the responsible person will adopt to ensure compliance with the Code, which:

i. must include details of the methods to be adopted for managing trees and maintaining a Minimum Clearance Space as required by the Code

There are 697 POEL poles that are the responsibility of VicTrack. Of these poles there are 135 poles in the HBRA. A desktop audit identified all of the spans as insulated cables.

The trees identified as requiring to be cleared are reviewed against previous inspections to determine if the amount of regrowth allowance should be modified.

Inspection/pruning programs and schedules

VicTrack has determined that the electric line clearance inspection and pruning will be undertaken annually. This period provides the greatest opportunity to maximise the amenity value of the trees.

A qualified and trained contractor has been appointed to undertake this year's annual inspections and collect data and provide a report of findings to VicTrack's Responsible Person. Trees that may grow into the Minimum Clearance Space before the next inspection are to be added to the Work instruction sheet Appendix 17.14 with instructions to ensure the trees remain clear of electrical lines until the next inspection cycle as a minimum. Each inspection shall be fully documented or recorded, and each pole will have the date of assessment recorded.

VicTrack expects all trees that need to be pruned around our POELs to be growing within our easements. However, the tree owner will be recorded to ensure the notification process is carried out correctly. Declared area mapping files are being sought at the time of writing this plan. In the interim the Group Manager Infrastructure will ensure all works identified are checked to see if the tree is growing on Council responsible land. If it is, the Council the tree is located in will be determined and manually checked to see if it is growing within a Declared Area.

The address will be recorded if the tree is growing on private property.

Notification will be carried out as per section 4q within this plan.

The schedule for this program will be based around the timelines in the Works schedule provided in Appendix 17.18. The schedule is designed to ensure the HBRA clearing, and compliance is achieved prior to the Declared Fire Season in each municipality of each year. The Declared Fire Season is monitored each year through the CFA Website <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions/fire-danger-period-restrictions>.

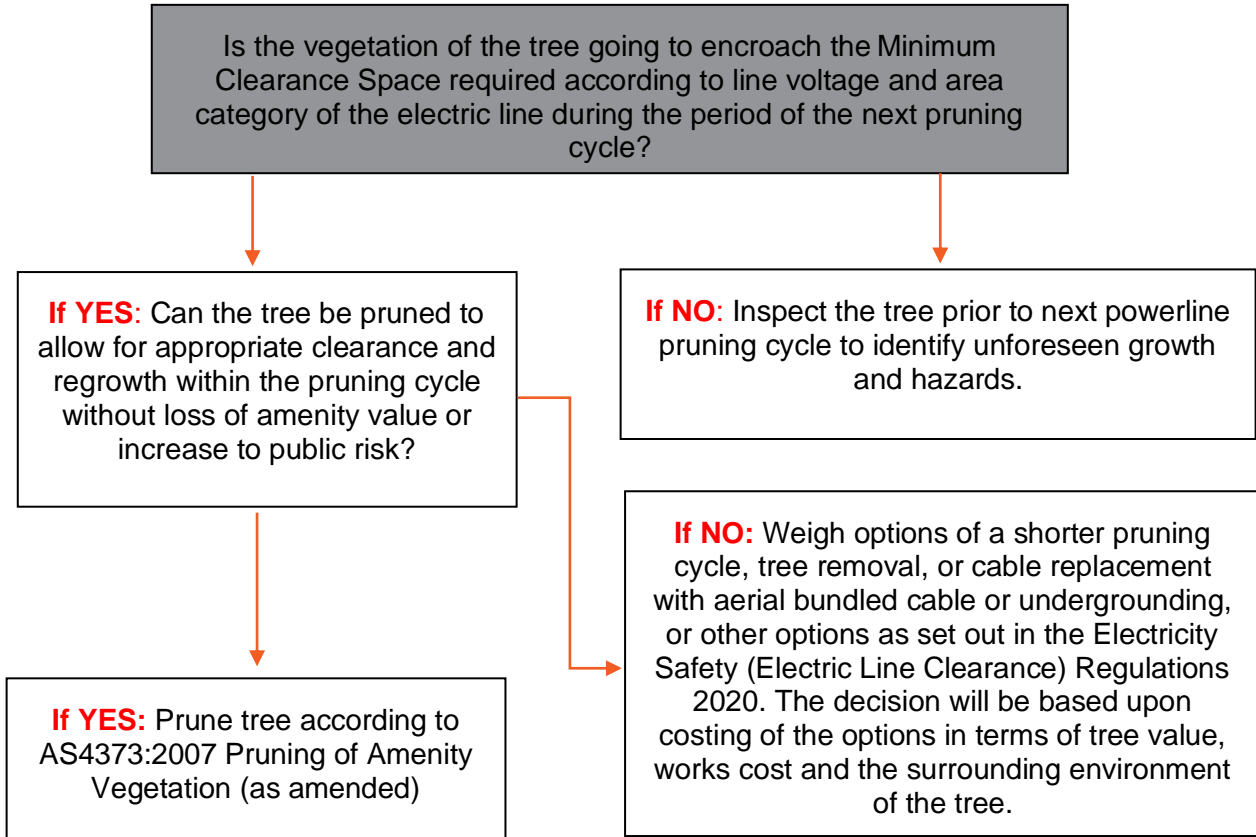
Progress to plan will be monitored and managed through VicTrack's monthly operations meeting. Any deficiencies will be reviewed and if required resources will be increased to ensure the schedule timeframes are met.

Due to the relative low number of poles and the spread of the locations across Victoria, VicTrack plans to inspect and clear its poles as one program and one zone with a HBRA and LBRA components inspected at the same time and works are to be carried out as per Appendix 17.18 - Works schedule. The cutting crew is required to prune the trees so that the distance between vegetation and powerlines is in accordance with the Regulations and to the Minimum Clearance Space plus an allowance for regrowth. The cutting crew will report to VicTrack's Responsible Person, the extent of regrowth observed from each species.

The Group Manager Infrastructure will use this information to evaluate the growth rates and size of all trees near powerlines and, where appropriate, take suitable action to remove fast growing and tall trees and consider replacing them with appropriate species or replace powerlines with engineering solutions. Appendix 17.18 shall be signed off at completion of the cutting program to verify the program is complete.

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The following outlines the decision-making process regarding maintaining line clearance.



During the inspection, trees encroaching the Minimum Clearance Space will be identified. In addition, any trees which are determined to be likely to encroach the Minimum Clearance Space before the next inspection are also to be identified.

In making these evaluations and before deciding on the most appropriate method, due consideration is given to the site's specifics, including:

- the significance of the site as a natural habitat of endangered flora and fauna
- relocation of the powerline from the vegetation-
 - evaluating the savings achieved by avoiding the recurrent costs of cutting
 - assessing the benefits of implementing available and practicable alternative construction methods
- the significance and public value of the site's aesthetics
- the impact on the tree's amenity and value if subjected to pruning versus removal
- the site's suitability to accept more appropriate species as replacements
- the environmental impact of proposed works
- determining the most appropriate method of actioning the offending vegetation concerned
- appropriate planning and scheduling
- identification and quantification of equipment and accredited personnel required
- any hazards outside the clearance and regrowth spaces that may require assessment or correction

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- funding
- community and customer consultation.

Each span inspected shall be recorded on a tablet with VicTrack's Fulcrum app. Each span identified as requiring clearance work shall be identified on the Fulcrum app and a backup hard copy recorded on the Inspection Work Instruction Sheet Appendix 17.14.

Detailed assessment of the specific pruning requirements of each tree will be assessed and recorded during the initial inspection prior to line clearance works being undertaken. VicTrack's clearing contractor will be directed to prune each tree in accordance with the Work Instructions issued by VicTrack and the cutting crew will document the work carried out by completing the Daily Work Sheet Appendix 17.15.

The trees will be pruned beyond the Minimum Clearance Space to allow for regrowth between the time of cutting and the next cycle. The regrowth distance is calculated by considering the species, local conditions and pruning frequency.

Where an inspector deems it likely that cutting is not likely to meet the requirements of AS4373 this will be indicated on the VicTrack Fulcrum app and the Inspection Work Instruction Sheet, and they will consult with the Group Manager Infrastructure to seek approval on the pruning method to be undertaken. The Group Manager Infrastructure will make the final decision on the method of pruning and formal sign off/remarks will be added to the VicTrack Database and the cutting crew will note the approval on the Daily Work Sheet Appendix 17.15.

All pruning works will be undertaken in accordance with the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020, AS4373:2007 Pruning of Amenity Trees and best practice methods. The cutting crew will document the work carried out by completing the Daily Work Sheet Appendix 17.15.

Access to the rail reserve

VicTrack rail reserves are operated by V/Line, ARTC and MTM Network. Access to the rail reserve requires planning. VicTrack will access the rail reserve to conduct inspections, clearing and audits as per VicTrack Procedure (Private Overhead Electric Line (POEL) inspection and maintenance).

Prioritising workloads and vegetation codes

All non-compliant works identified in the HBRA are to be cleared prior to the declared fire danger period. Outside the Declared Fire Season works will be prioritised based on the codes and risk the vegetation poses to the electricity network. The maintenance system uses the following priority code system:

P1 – Insulated conductors – Vegetation >10mm diameter is in contact with insulated bare conductors

P1 – Bare conductors – Vegetation in contact with bare conductors.

P2 – Insulated conductors – Span is not a P1 and there is Vegetation >10mm inside the Minimum Clearance Space or light vegetation inside the Minimum Clearance Space that has not been inspected or cleared within the last 12 months.

P2 – Bare conductors – A span that is not a P1 and there is vegetation inside the Minimum Clearance Space.

P3 – Insulated conductors – A span that is not a P1 or P2 and there is vegetation that is likely to grow inside the Minimum Clearance Space before the next inspection cycle. Or vegetation <10mm inside the Minimum Clearance Space and has been inspected within the previous 12 months.

P3 – Bare conductors - A span that is not a P1 or P2 and there is vegetation that is likely to grow inside the Minimum Clearance Space before the next inspection cycle.

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P4 – All conductors – A span that is not a P1, P2 or P3 and there is vegetation that may grow inside the Minimum Clearance Space within the next four years.

NVS – A span that is not a P1, P2, P3 or P4 and there is no vegetation that is likely to grow inside the Minimum Clearance Space within the next four years.

Minimum rectification timeframes for priority codes

The following timeframes must be adhered to as a minimum. All P1 and P2 in Declared Fire Season to be cleared as Urgent works as prescribed in this section.

Vegetation code	Minimum rectification timeframes		
	During fire danger period	Other times (Not during fire danger period)	All times
	HBRA	HBRA	LBRA
P1 Insulated cables	30 days from Inspection or Report* date	90 days from Inspection or Report* date	180 days from Inspection or Report* date
P1 Bare conductor	24 hours from inspection or report* date. If not safe to clear an observer is required to be posted on a total fire ban day while FDI is above 30	60 days from inspection or report* date and before the commencement of the Declared Fire Season	60 days from inspection or report* date
P2 Insulated cables	90 days from inspection or report date*	180 days from inspection or report* date and before vegetation becomes a P1 and before the commencement of Declared Fire Season	180 days from inspection or report* date and before vegetation becomes a P1
P2 Bare conductor	14 days from inspection or report date*	180 days from inspection or report* date and before vegetation becomes a P1 and before the commencement of Declared Fire Season commences	180 days from inspection or report* date and before vegetation becomes a P1
P3 All conductors	Before Vegetation enters Minimum Clearance Space	Before vegetation enters Minimum Clearance Space	Before vegetation enters Minimum Clearance Space

*Vegetation reported from ESV will be cleared within this timeframe unless directed by ESV to clear within an earlier timeframe.

Urgent pruning

This section applies to the Group Manager Infrastructure undertaking any cutting or removal that is urgently required:

- (a) as a result of encroachment or growth of trees that was not anticipated in this plan

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- (b) as a result of a tree falling or becoming damaged so that it is required to be cut or removed to maintain the Minimum Clearance Space
- (c) because a suitably qualified arborist has-
 - i. assessed the tree having regard to foreseeable local conditions; and
 - ii. advised the Group Manager Infrastructure that the tree, or any part of the tree, is likely to imminently fall onto or otherwise come into contact with an electric line
- (d) during the fire danger period declared under the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958* VicTrack will undertake urgent cutting and pruning activities should the following situations arise:

Urgent trees may be identified as part of routine inspections, ad hoc inspections, observations or audits. VicTrack may also be notified of urgent trees by external sources including from the public, councils, ESV or other stakeholders.

VicTrack will only undertake urgent works in accordance with the Regulations and will not remove or cut any tree more than one metre from the Minimum Clearance Space around the electric line. Ongoing monitoring by visual assessment of the regrowth rates of trees in the vicinity of VicTrack's assets will be undertaken to ensure continued compliance.

Urgent pruning identified due to encroachment of the Minimum Clearance Space as outlined in (a) and (d) above will be cleared within the minimum rectification times noted in this section. A tree deemed to be urgent because it is likely to fall or become damaged in line with (b) and (c) above, are to be cleared before they are anticipated to enter the Minimum Clearance Space.

As part of such works, the Group Manager Infrastructure will be sure to collect and maintain records of where and when the cutting or removal was undertaken, identify why the cutting/removal was required and record when the last inspection of the tree occurred. All data records will be maintained at the VicTrack office. VicTrack will store the records as required by regulations.

The Group Manager Infrastructure, as soon as practicable after completing the cutting or removal, shall follow the notification process for urgent cutting and removal process in 4q Clause 19 Notification for Urgent Tree Cutting or Removal of this plan.

Notified work required and conducted

The Group Manager Infrastructure will ensure locations VicTrack has been notified of by the ESV or any other stakeholder as requiring attention to maintain the Minimum Clearance Space, and which are the responsibility of VicTrack, are assessed by a VicTrack assessor as soon as practical following receipt of the notice.

When applicable, the Group Manager Infrastructure will program these works according to the above standard procedures. Works will be cleared within the standard rectification timeframes or sooner if directed by ESV. VicTrack will notify ESV or other stakeholder upon completion of the clearing. Records of these reports and clearing shall be maintained as per VicTrack's Archive procedure.

Habitat for threatened fauna

If VicTrack identifies a tree that provides habitat, the following process will be implemented to manage the tree/s;

As soon as a tree is identified as the habitat of a possibly threatened species, the operator must stop work and inform their supervisor, or VicTrack, and seek clarification of the threatened species and the breeding season of that species. VicTrack or the contractor will refer to the list from within the links in section 4i.

Works will be scheduled outside of breeding season where practicable.

Translocation of the fauna if not practical to undertake outside of the breeding season.

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Cutting only to occur when not practicable to cut or remove outside the breeding season.

Cutting or removal of habitat for threatened fauna is only to occur to achieve the Minimum Clearance Space or to make an unsafe situation safe.

Managing and recording regrowth

VicTrack's Responsible Person will monitor and record the observed rate of growth of species under the varying growing conditions that prevail in each of the areas and apply these observations when determining the extent and frequency of pruning. The inspector will record the estimated growth rate from the previous year on the Inspection Work Instruction Sheet Appendix 17.14.

The following growth rates have been assumed by VicTrack.

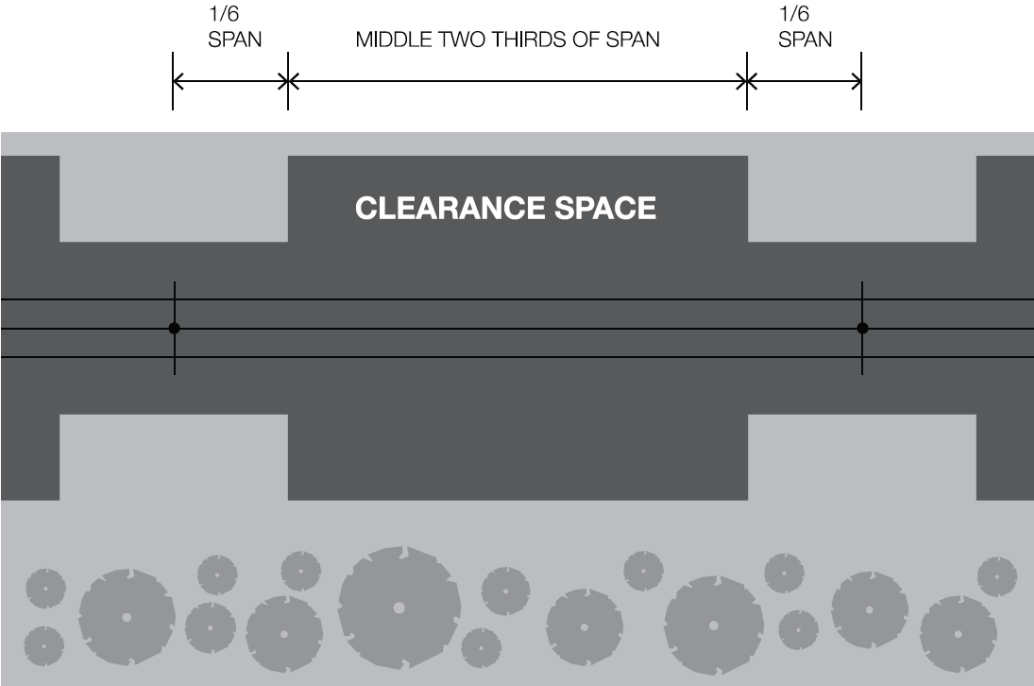
Species	Annual estimated growth rate side	Annual estimated growth rate under
Eucalypts	.2m	.8m
Cypress	.2m	.5m
Other Exotics	.2m	.6m

Managing the Minimum Clearance Space

The applicable distances are determined within the regulations. The Minimum Clearance Space is the applicable distance plus an allowance for sag and sway, determined by VicTrack. VicTrack will clear to the Minimum Clearance Space plus an allowance for regrowth of vegetation that may grow into the Minimum Clearance Space before the next cutting cycle, to ensure compliance is always maintained.

The sag and sway of the conductor increases as the distance from the supports increases. The applicable distance and the allowance for sag and sway increases for the middle two-thirds of the span. Figure 1 from Schedule 2 of The Code illustrates this in Plan View, where clearance space is the applicable distance.

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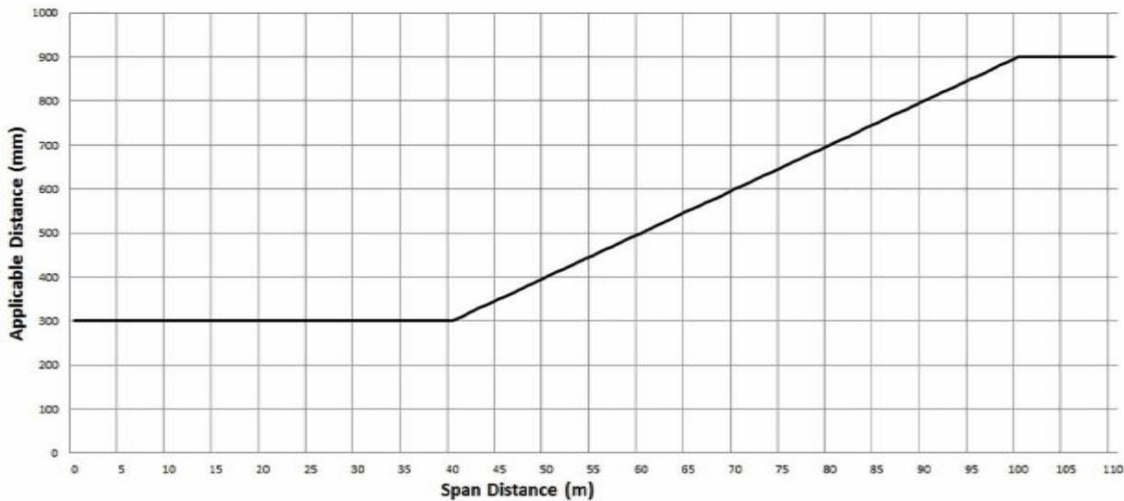
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The Minimum Clearance Space required is detailed under Schedule 1 of the *Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020 – Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance* and summarised in the following tables.

TABLE 1 - MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACES SURROUNDING A POWERLINE-ALL AREAS
Insulated electric line

MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACES IN ALL DIRECTIONS	
Near the pole	300mm
Centre 2/3rds	Refer to graph 1

Graph 1



These clearances in this section allow for sag and sway of the conductors. Refer to Schedule 2 of the Code for further details.

The direction of the Minimum Clearance Space from around the conductors is illustrated below

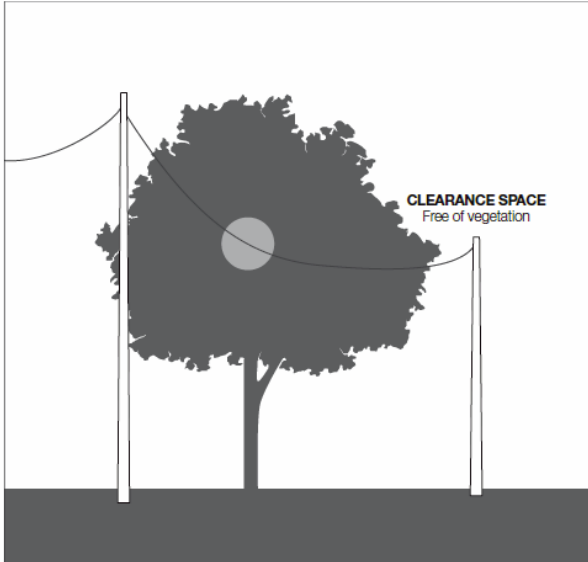
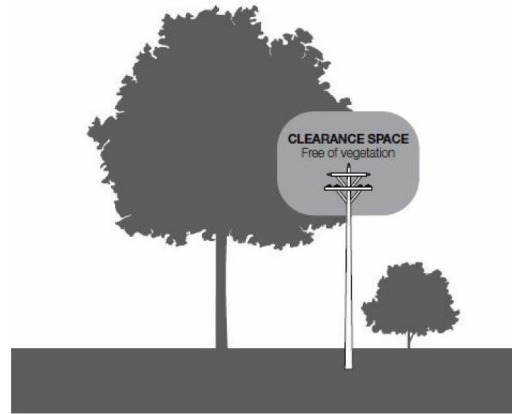


FIGURE 3—INSULATED ELECTRIC LINES IN ALL AREAS AND UNINSULATED HIGH VOLTAGE ELECTRIC LINES (OTHER THAN 66 000 VOLT ELECTRIC LINES) IN LOW BUSHFIRE RISK AREAS

Clauses 24 and 26, Graphs 1 and 3



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Insulated cables in all areas

Also Refer Schedule 2-Applicable distance for middle two-thirds of electric line span of the Regulations. An allowance for sag and sway is not required for insulated spans.

VicTrack expects all of its POELs are insulated lines and therefore the chart below will be the key reference for the Minimum Clearance Space.

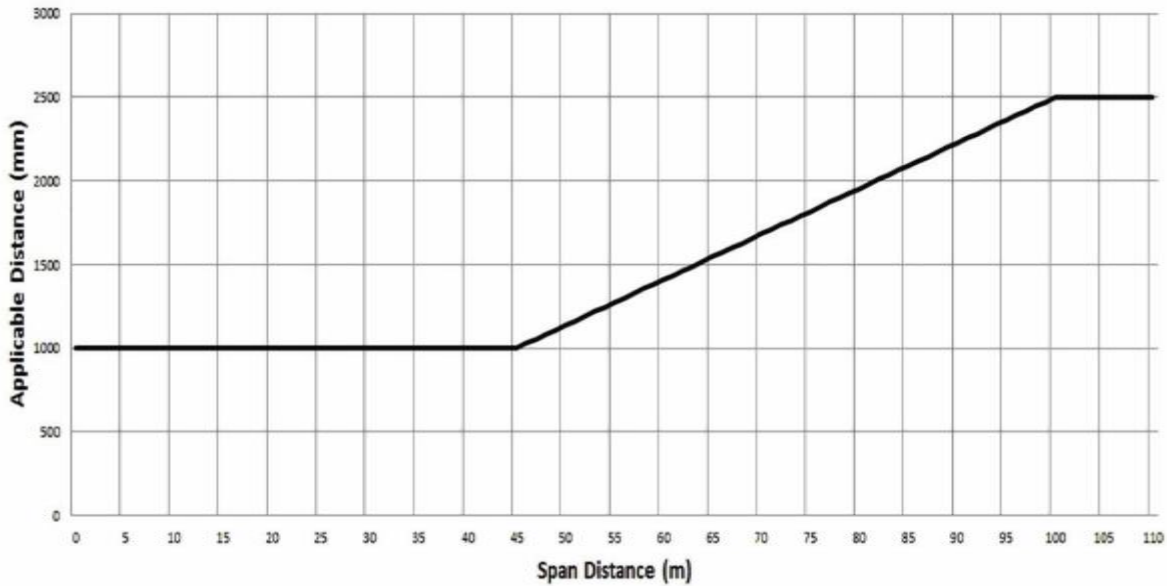
Insulated cables / services HBRA & LBRA		
Minimum Clearance Space required in all directions		
	1st 1/6 th of span (mm)	Centre 2/3rds of span (mm)
40m	300	300
45m	300	350
50m	300	400
55m	300	450
60m	300	500
65m	300	550
70m	300	600
75m	300	650
80m	300	700
85m	300	750
90m	300	800
95m	300	850
100m	300	900

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MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACES SURROUNDING A LOW VOLTAGE UNINSULATED POWERLINE IN LOW BUSHFIRE RISK AREAS

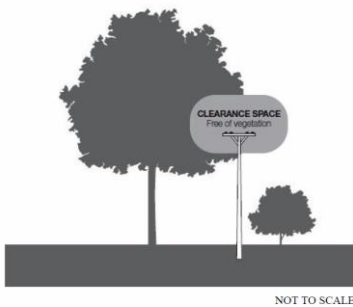
MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACES IN ALL DIRECTIONS	
Near the pole	1000 mm*
Centre 2/3rds	Refer to graph 2

GRAPH 2



*The clearances in the above graph allow for sag and sway for spans up to 100m. For spans greater than 100m an allowance for sag and sway is required. VicTrack does not expect to have any bare conductors or span lengths greater than 100m. If a span greater than 100m is identified, the line will be surveyed to determine conductor type and the actual physical sag. Charts with standard cable temperature curves will be used to determine the sag allowance based on the conductor type.

FIGURE 4—UNINSULATED LOW VOLTAGE ELECTRIC LINE IN A LOW BUSHFIRE RISK AREA
Clause 25, Graph 2



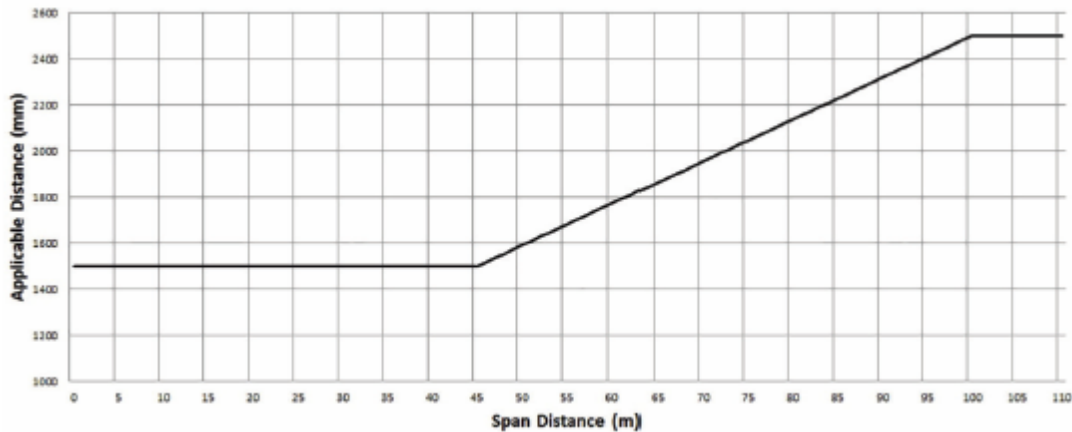
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Note: VicTrack does not have records of the following voltages or conductor types. The following charts are included for reference should unforeseen assets be identified

MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACES SURROUNDING AN UNINSULATED HIGH VOLTAGE ELECTRIC LINE (Other than 66kV electric lines) in LOW BUSHFIRE RISK AREA

MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACES IN ALL DIRECTIONS	
Near the pole	1500 mm*
Centre 2/3rds	Refer to graph 3

GRAPH 3



*The clearances in the above graph allow for sag and sway for spans up to 100m. For spans greater than 100m an allowance for sag and sway is required. VicTrack does not expect to have any bare conductors or span lengths greater than 100m. If a span greater than 100m is identified, the line will be surveyed to determine conductor type the actual physical sag to determine the amount to allow for sway and sag charts with standard cable temperature curves will be used to determine the sag allowance based on the conductor type.

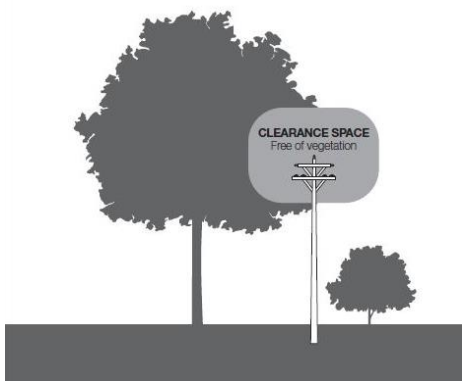


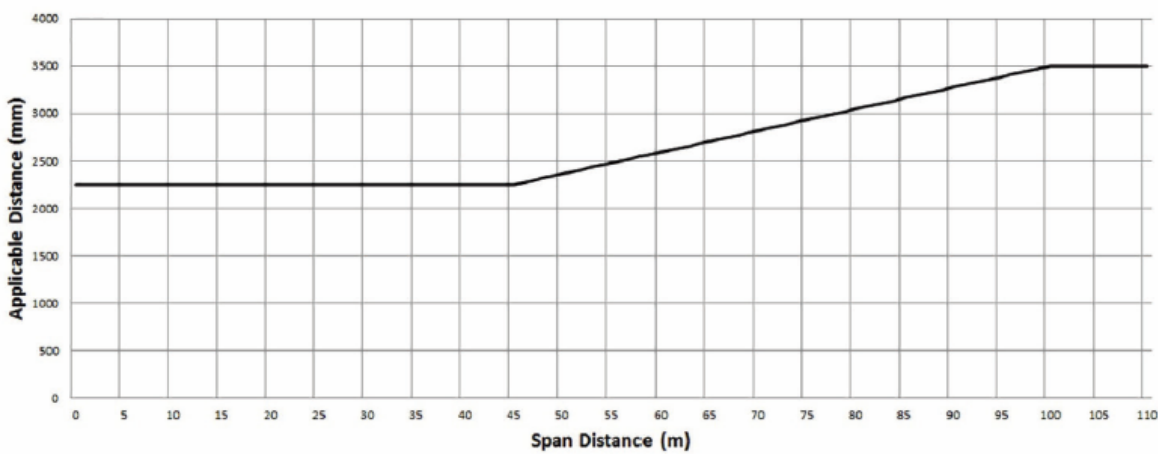
Figure 3 from the Code—Uninsulated High Voltage Electric Lines (Other than 66kV) in Low Bushfire Risk Areas

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MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACE SURROUNDING AN UNINSULATED 66kV ELECTRIC LINE in LBRA

MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACES IN ALL DIRECTIONS	
Near the pole	2250 mm*
Centre 2/3rds	Refer to graph 4

Graph 4



*The clearances in the above graph allow for sag and sway for spans up to 100m. For spans greater than 100m an allowance for sag and sway is required. VicTrack does not expect to have any bare conductors or span lengths greater than 100m. If a span greater than 100m is identified, the line will be surveyed to determine conductor type the actual physical sag to determine the amount to allow for sway and sag charts with standard cable temperature curves will be used to determine the sag allowance based on the conductor type.

*The Minimum Clearance Space is to be maintained to the side and vertically to the sky as illustrated in Figure 5 from the Code below.

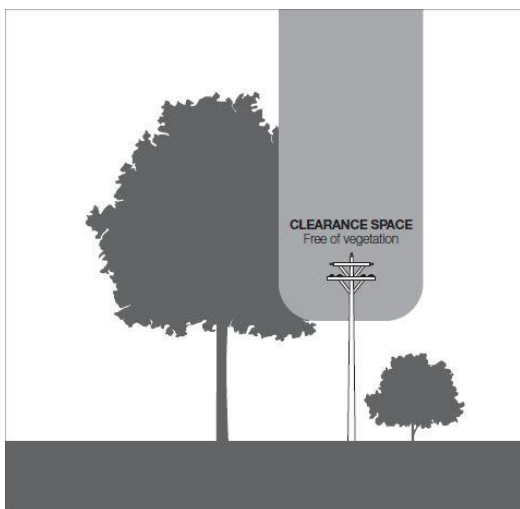


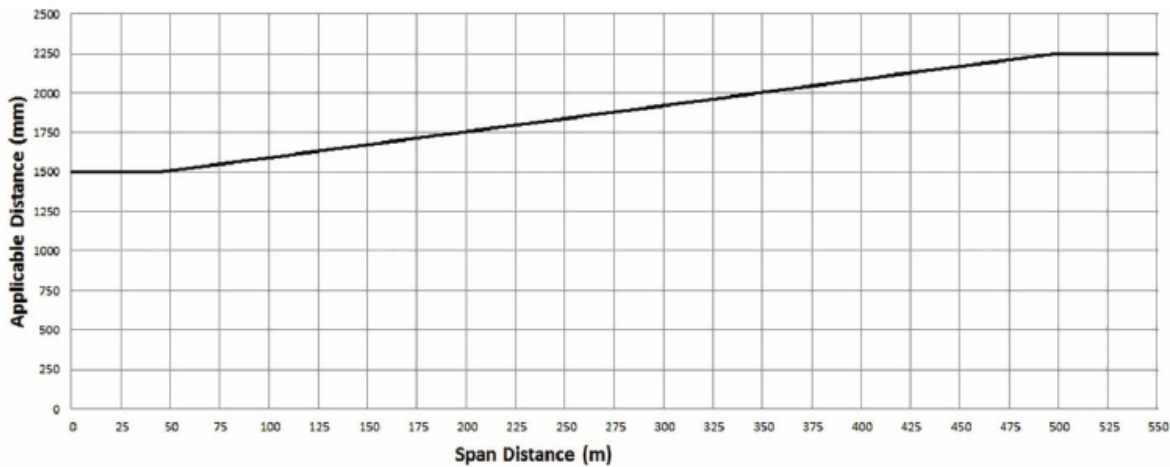
Figure 5 – Uninsulated 66,000-volt electric line in LBRA and uninsulated electric line in HBRA

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MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACES SURROUNDING AN UNINSULATED LOW VOLTAGE AND HIGH VOLTAGE (Other than 66kV Electric Line) in HBRA

MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACES IN ALL DIRECTIONS	
Near the pole	1500 mm*
Centre 2/3rds	Refer to graph 5

GRAPH 5



*The clearances in the above graph allow for sag and sway for spans up to 45m. For spans greater than 45m an allowance for sag and sway is required. VicTrack does not expect to have any bare conductors or span lengths greater than 45m. If a span greater than 45m is identified, the line will be surveyed to determine conductor type the actual physical sag to determine the amount to allow for sway and sag charts with standard cable temperature curves will be used to determine the sag allowance based on the conductor type.

*The Minimum Clearance Space is to be maintained to the side and vertically to the sky as illustrated in Figure 5 from the Code below.



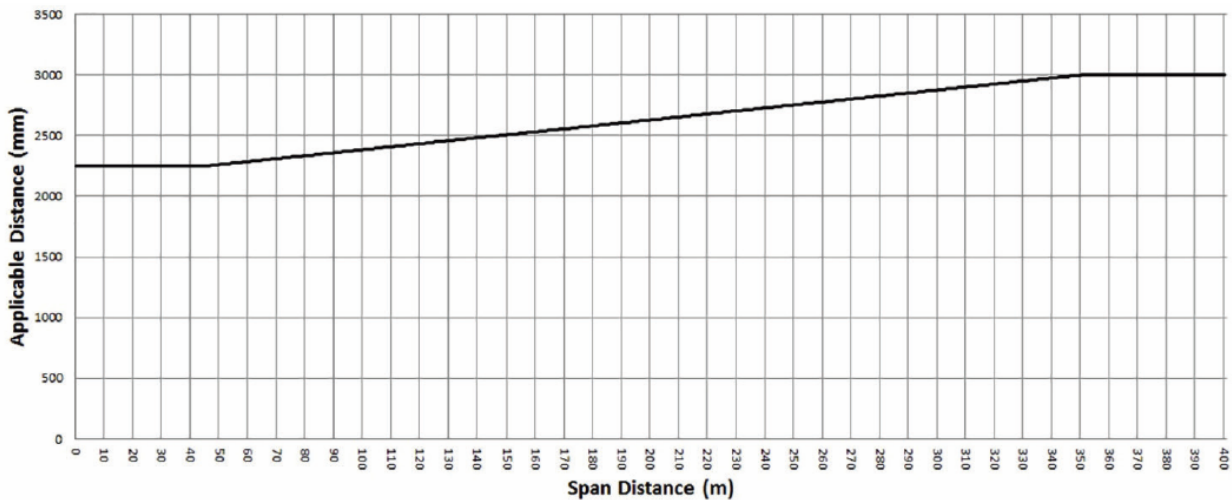
Figure 5 – Uninsulated 66,000-volt electric line in LBRA and uninsulated electric line in HBRA

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MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACES SURROUNDING AN UNINSULATED 66kV ELECTRIC LINE in HAZARDOUS BUSHFIRE RISK AREA

MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACES IN ALL DIRECTIONS	
Near the pole	2250 mm*
Centre 2/3rds	Refer to graph 6

GRAPH 6



*The clearances in the above graph allow for sag and sway for spans up to 45m. For spans greater than 45m an allowance for sag and sway is required. VicTrack does not expect to have any bare conductors or span lengths greater than 45m. If a span greater than 45m is identified, the line will be surveyed to determine conductor type the actual physical sag to determine the amount to allow for sway and sag charts with standard cable temperature curves will be used to determine the sag allowance based on the conductor type.

*The Minimum Clearance Space is to be maintained to the side and vertically to the sky as illustrated in Figure 5 from the Code below.



Figure 5 – Uninsulated 66,000-volt electric line in LBRA and uninsulated electric line in HBRA

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i. for the purposes of determining a Minimum Clearance Space in accordance with Division 1 of Part 3 of the Code:

- A. must specify the method for determining an additional distance that allows for conductor sag and sway; and

The Minimum Clearance Space to be maintained for the centre two-thirds of spans is specified in Schedule 2 of the Regulations. A summary to be used for operational purposes is included in the charts above.

VicTrack expects all of our spans to be insulated and therefore we do not expect the need to allow for sag and sway.

Should a span be identified that requires an allowance for sag and sway as described in 4j (i), the line will be surveyed to determine:

- conductor type
- the actual physical sag

The varying sag allowance will be calculated by using standard cable temperature curves to determine sag allowance based on the conductor type.

Employees and subcontractors employed in the process of inspection are inducted into the ELCMP.

The Group Manager Infrastructure will maintain all records of sag and sway calculations and they will be maintained on the database for future reference as required by regulations.

- B. may provide for different additional distances to be determined for different parts of an electric line span;

VicTrack will not use different distances for different sections of the electric line.

(k) the procedures to be adopted if it is not practicable to comply with the requirements of AS 4373 while cutting a tree in accordance with the Code

VicTrack's Responsible Person is to ensure the latest version of AS4373 is being referenced, which is currently AS4373-2007. VicTrack strives for its internal staff and contractors to meet the pruning standard set out in AS4373 as far as a reasonably practicable while completing cutting activities to clear vegetation from electrical assets.

Reasonably practicably in relation to AS4373 means that which is, or was at a time, reasonably able to be done in relation to ensuring continued tree health and future tree safety, considering and weighing up all relevant matters including:

- (a) The likelihood of the hazard or the risk concerned occurring – will the action create a defect, hazard, loss of tree health or aesthetic value in the present or future.
- (b) The degree of harm that might result from the hazard or the risk - what will the impact be on the tree or future safety of the public.
- (c) What the person concerned knows, or ought reasonably to know about:
 - i. The hazard or the risk – must have adequate knowledge to determine the hazards and risks
 - ii. Ways of eliminating or minimising the risk – must have adequate knowledge in relation to alternative measures.
- (d) The availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise the risk – are other resources or techniques available to complete works to the standard.
- (e) After assessing the extent of the risk and the available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, the cost associated with available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, including

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whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk – does the cost required to complete works to the standard grossly outweigh the value of the tree.

Staff or contractors completing pruning works are required to complete all works to AS4373 as far as reasonably practicable which includes not lopping or topping trees, using top/bottom cut method to prune to eliminate bark tearing. Where this cannot be achieved, the site or trees will be referred to VicTrack's Responsible Person to make an assessment on whether it is reasonably practicable to deviate from AS4373.

Qualified and trained personnel

VicTrack employees and contractors undertaking vegetation management activities shall have sufficient knowledge, qualifications, training, authorisation and experience appropriate for the task they are to perform to ensure tree activities are conducted in a safe and environmentally responsible manner.

All vegetation workers must complete Certificate II in ESI Powerline Vegetation Control. This course provides competencies for planning and carrying out vegetation control at and above ground level near live electrical apparatus. For inspectors, this training must include the following modules; AHPCPM201A - Recognise plants and UETTDRVC24A - Assess vegetation and recommend control measures in an ESI environment. Specific roles and course codes are outlined in Appendix 17.17.

Where a worker performs multiple roles, they shall undertake the mandatory training for each of those roles. To operate high risk plant and equipment (e.g. EWP) the operator shall have the applicable High Risk Licence issued by WorkSafe Victoria.

Induction training of VicTrack employees and contractors shall be undertaken prior to commencing or accessing the site. Employees and contractors must be inducted into the safety requirements for the contract and the site prior to being permitted to undertake works on the site. AS 4373 and the definition of *as far as practicable* will be provided to personnel at the induction.

Where pruning to achieve the Minimum Clearance Space plus an allowance for regrowth will not allow compliance with AS4373, VicTrack may elect to:

- increase the pruning frequency to minimise the required pruning
- remove scaffold/ parent limbs initially to minimise future required pruning
- remove trees where the resulting pruning would otherwise leave trees unsuitable for retention.

Where the above situations occur, the VicTrack Responsible Person is to be notified. Where trees are to be removed, relevant affected persons area are to be consulted in accordance with the notification process.

Plant and equipment

The process for selection of appropriate plant & equipment involves the following considerations:

- access to site
- voltage of overhead conductors - equipment suitably insulated and tested
- proximity of vegetation to conductors
- configuration of equipment
- reach/ height of equipment
- cutting tools proportional to material to be cut.

Once each of the above points has been considered, the best fit for the task should be selected. Availability may also be a defining factor, where the best fit is not available other options may be considered, however must still be able to achieve acceptable pruning standards in a safe manner.

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All items of plant and equipment (including contractor's plant) utilised on the contract must undergo a plant risk assessment/initial audit and all safety risks must be appropriately controlled prior to use of any plant or equipment on site. This can take the form of a Health and Safety Audit Appendix 17.4 or an approved plant risk assessment from a qualified supplier.

Daily plant pre-start safety checks are compulsory for all plant on site and must be undertaken at the beginning of each work shift prior to use or operation of the plant by the relevant operator. Specific Daily Plant Safety Checklists Appendix 17.11 relevant and appropriate to the item of plant are to be used for this purpose – samples of each shall be kept. A contractor may use their own process if approved by VicTrack's Responsible Person.

Other audit forms for plant and equipment are as follows:

Plant and Equipment Audit – EWP – Appendix 17.5

Plant and Equipment Audit – Tipper/Chipper – Appendix 17.6

Auditing

VicTrack and contractors shall conduct regular inspections of work sites to ensure that cutting or removal is done in accordance with industry standards, including AS4373:2007i and that contractors continually demonstrate compliance with the prescribed safety and environmentally responsible aspects of the industry.

VicTrack's Group Manager Infrastructure is responsible for comprehensive auditing of the vegetation management process including compliance to the requirements of this plan. An annual Audit Program has been created Appendix 17.2.

Primary audits, such as OHS systems, environmental management systems, quality control, traffic management procedures, etc., are targeted at the verification of systems of management and risk mitigation. These are further supported by field verification and compliance monitoring audits.

Primary audits are conducted by personnel who have suitable audit training and background. External specialist resources, which are experienced and have appropriate expertise in the relevant field, may be engaged to assist. Where practicable to do so, VicTrack staff and contractors' management are directly involved in these audits.

The audit schedule is reviewed annually to address any changes in business requirements, concerns from previous years, and the contractor's performance history. There are broadly four different types of audits within the schedule, relating to:

- Health and safety – Safe work methods (e.g. general work methods, working near powerlines and tree clearing methods), equipment vehicles and plant, inductions, training and authorisation, traffic management.
- Compliance – General inspection and cutting compliance with programs, hazardous trees, stakeholder and defect management.
- Procedure/work instruction – Policies, work instructions, procedures, customer notification, data management and accuracy, reporting and documentation.
- Environmental – Important or significant vegetation, chemicals, weeds, noise, pruning technique and quality.

The audit process considers actual performance and outputs and then compares them against planned performance and expected outputs. Where a variation occurs, the item is noted and followed through to ensure corrective actions are taken and improvement opportunities are factored into plans to enhance future performance.

In addition to the audits carried out above, a *Code Compliance Audit* is conducted annually by VicTrack's Responsible Person in a format as per Appendix 17.3. This audit is designed to ensure

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VicTrack's compliance with the Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance contained in the Schedule to the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020. The annual review of the ELCMP will ensure that the latest version of AS4373 is being applied.

The focus of the audit is on VicTrack's systems, records and processes that have been designed and are used to manage VicTrack's electric line clearance obligations. Compliance with the Code is strongly inferred by the tracking of the KPIs under Appendix 17.3. The audit under this section is designed to explicitly determine the extent of compliance with the Code.

Non-conformances

Any non-conformances identified will be addressed within agreed timeframes and with agreed methods. If a non-compliance is found to be a result of a contractor not meeting its contractual obligations, the breach of compliance may be deemed by the Group Manager Infrastructure as a breach of contract and may result in termination of the contract.

(l) A description of each alternative compliance mechanism in respect of which the responsible person has applied, or proposes to apply, for approval under clause 31 of the Code

This clause is not applicable to VicTrack at this time. If an alternative compliance mechanism is required in the future, this ELCMP will be updated to reflect proper process to be followed.

(m) The details of each approval for an alternative compliance mechanism

- i. that the responsible person holds

This clause is not applicable to VicTrack at this time. If an alternative compliance mechanism is required in the future, this ELCMP will be updated to reflect proper process to be followed.

- ii. that is in effect

This clause is not applicable to VicTrack at this time. If an alternative compliance mechanism is required in the future, this ELCMP will be updated to reflect proper process to be followed.

(n) A description of the measures that must be used to assess the performance of the responsible person under the management plan

The Group Manager Infrastructure will ensure regular audits are conducted as per the Audit Program Appendix 17.2 to ensure that inspection (Inspection Quality Audit - Appendix 17.7 and cutting (Cutting Quality Audit - Appendix 8) has been completed in accordance with industry standards, including Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020, AS4373:2007 *Pruning of Amenity Trees* and best practice methods and according to the schedule.

Continual monitoring of historical workload indicators will take place using Appendix 17.3 in respect to the number of:

- identified vegetation clearance breaches to the code
- emergency clearances
- customer requests for line clearance
- ESV requests for pruning
- clearing not meeting quality requirements (AS4373 min.).

VicTrack has considered the risk associated with the non-compliance and the population of trees and determined a 10 per cent sample size to be adequate to mitigate the risks and meet the objectives of the plan. Audits may be conducted with the assistance of photographic evidence.

Power outage reports will be reviewed annually.

Non-conformances are reviewed to identify the root causes. Any improvements identified that can be readily rectified are implemented immediately. The root causes are reviewed formally at operations

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meetings to determine an action plan to prevent reoccurrence or identify if further issues that are likely to arise from the same cause.

All audit forms are to be returned to the Group Manager Infrastructure for filing and non-conformance or improvements to be registered on the Corrective Action Register (CAR) Appendix 17.09. The CAR is reviewed weekly to ensure all items are closed out.

Utilising this historical data, a range of benchmarks for intervention of non-compliance has been established.

For internal audits a 90 per cent minimum compliance benchmark is in place. This audit covers both clearance and quality of works to AS4373. Scoring less than this threshold requires investigation and the program will not be recorded complete until additional works are completed, and a new audit conducted. This process is performed by a senior team leader. A range of performance related penalties apply within our externally contracted service, while works by internal staff are subject to individual performance management. This allows mechanisms and incentives for improvement.

Analysis of work types, job numbers and works priorities completed each year are also used to give insight into the number of trees reaching intervention levels between pruning cycles. Review of works completed over consecutive visits can show trends in the performance of the current ELCMP. An increase in high and urgent priority works of greater than 10 per cent triggers an investigation by the Asset Maintenance Manager to investigate causes and implement improvement strategies where required.

When vegetation pruning methods are unable to comply with the requirements of AS4373, the contractor will consult with the Asset Maintenance Manager to seek approval on the pruning method to be undertaken. The Asset Maintenance Manager will make the final decision on the method of pruning and formal sign off/remarks is to be added to the Daily Work Sheet Appendix 17.15 that advice and approval has been sought from a senior team leader. AS4373 and the definition of as far as practicable will be outworked to personnel at the induction. Every action will be taken to ensure that vegetation pruning methods taken minimise the extent of pruning and the effects of such pruning on vegetation. The process above is not required when a tree is being trimmed back to established practices for that tree.

(o) Details of the audit processes that must be used to determine the responsible person's compliance with the Code

Primary audits are conducted by personnel who have suitable training and work background. External specialist resources, which are experienced and have appropriate expertise in the relevant field, may be engaged to assist. Where appropriate, contractor and VicTrack management are to be directly involved in these audits. Refer to Appendix 17.2 for Audit Program.

The HBRA is audited during October each year and any follow up works are carried out during the months of October to November and before the Declared Fire Season.

All audit forms are to be returned to the Group Manager Infrastructure for filing and non-conformance or improvements to be registered on the Corrective Action Register Appendix 17.09.

Any non-conformances or required improvement actions will be recorded on the audit and CAR and be implemented immediately and signed off when completed.

Any additional hazards/risks (or any risk controls that are not effective) identified by the audits must be recorded on the checklist, addressed immediately with appropriate risk control measures (agreed with the affected persons). All non-conformances shall be addressed within agreed timeframes and with agreed methods. All work activities relating to the extreme or high risks identified must cease until the risk has been effectively eliminated or controlled (if not possible to eliminate risk).

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ESV or other stakeholders may conduct audits and may report trees to VicTrack. These items will be reviewed, and items identified as not complying with clearance tables will be programmed to be cleared. The Group Manager Infrastructure will decide if the items can be programmed in line with its annual program, but all trees must be cleared before any timeframes provided by ESV as a minimum.

Any non-compliance will be rectified, and any continued non-compliance shall be outworked with the contractor e.g. change of processes/procedure, re-training, etc.

Control of non-conformances

The root causes for the non-conformances are to be identified and monitored. Recurrence of the same non-conformance will be reviewed to determine the root cause of the problem. Non-conformances that are likely to result in a safety hazard or not complying with The Regulations are considered critical and must be dealt with immediately. Non-conformances that are not critical are reviewed at the operations meetings and annual review and may result in further training and revision of this plan. Non-conformances may be treated as a breach of contract and as such, the contract may be terminated at the discretion of the Group Manager Infrastructure.

Any non-conformances identified by VicTrack will be addressed within the timeframes and with agreed methods. The potential risk of a non-compliance can vary greatly, and this will be evaluated by the Group Manager Infrastructure, who will have responsibility for determining the rectification timeframes.

Any non-compliance will be rectified, and any continued non-compliance shall be outworked with the contractor as deemed necessary.

Annual review and continuous improvement

Operations Meetings are carried out monthly during the electric line clearance program. The results of the audits and other items that were documented as not going to plan will be reviewed. The purpose of the review is to identify strategies to prevent reoccurrence or identify if further issues are likely to arise and identify cost effective improvements and apply alterations where required for the following year's ELCMP.

(p) The qualifications and experience that the responsible person must require of the persons who are to carry out the inspection, cutting or removal of trees in accordance with the Code

VicTrack does not employ in-house vegetation workers. The Group Manager Infrastructure will source suppliers through its tender process and preferred suppliers list and ensure all workers comply with its rail industry worker requirements.

The Group Manager Infrastructure is responsible for inducting vegetation subcontractor (VSC) employees into the requirements of this Electric Line Clearance Management Plan using Appendix 17.10 Induction checklist. They are also responsible for ensuring the VSC are appropriately qualified and trained and have certificates of attainment for the employees and their equipment that legally entitles them to undertake the work.

A record of accreditation, training, qualifications and inductions for VSC personnel involved in VicTrack's site access shall be kept by the Group Manager Infrastructure, which shall include, the current training and refresher certificates of individuals including mandatory training requirements. The Group Manager Infrastructure is to maintain a training matrix for the above to ensure compliance with the Training Matrix in Appendix 17.17. The currency of VicTrack training records of personnel involved in works are to be regularly inspected and validated with field inspections. All records are to be maintained for five years within VicTrack's archive process.

Any VSC individual found on a VicTrack work site that is identified as non-compliant with mandatory training will result in exclusion from VicTrack's future contract works.

Key documents stipulating the training requirements

- Regulation 616(2) of the Electricity Safety (General) Regulations 2019 sets out specific requirements for qualified persons carrying out vegetation management work.
- ESV Certificate Approval Statement
- Vegetation subcontractor works are to be undertaken in accordance with the Victorian Traction Industry Electrical Safety Rules 2014 Section 12.4:

Vegetation management clearing work means the pruning, cutting, trimming or felling of a tree. It is assisting to prune, cut, trim or fell a tree where any part of the tree is or may come within, or the work requires any person, tool, equipment or vehicle to come within, the minimum safe distance prescribed in the *Electricity Safety Act 1998* (the Act) for persons who are not employed, engaged or under control of the electrical asset owner.

No person shall perform tree clearing work in the vicinity of live electrical apparatus, unless the person:

- (a) has completed a training course approved by ESV, and
- (b) has a standard of qualifications, proficiency and experience that enable the person to safely perform the work, and
- (c) has been endorsed in writing by the organisation (e.g. the employer) to perform the work, and
- (d) has documented a hazard identification and risk assessment, and
- (e) has implemented a risk management process to control hazards associated with the work, and
- (f) complies with Electrical Safety Rules for vegetation management work near overhead powerlines by non-electrical workers, as published or amended from time to time by Energy Safe Victoria.

ESV approved course

Approved training certificate - For the purposes of the definition of qualified person in regulations 614, 616 and 617 of the General Regulations, the training certificate ESV approves is a certificate that specifies satisfactory completion of the National UET20319 Certificate II in ESI Powerline Vegetation Control. The certificate must be issued by a registered training organisation as defined in the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*.

Additional requirements

Regulation 616(2) of the General Regulations requires that a qualified person carrying out vegetation management work in the vicinity of a protected aerial line must comply with-

- (a) the Electrical Safety Rules for Vegetation Management Work Near Overhead Powerlines by Non-Electrical Workers, as published or amended from time to time by ESV; and
- (b) *The Blue Book 2017 Code of Practice on electrical safety for the work on or near high voltage electrical apparatus* when working on or near high voltage electrical equipment; and
- (c) *The Orange Book Victorian Traction Industry Electrical Safety Rules 2019* when working on or near a railway or tram network supply.

Suitably qualified vegetation sub contractor tree workers and support staff:

VicTrack's Group Manager Infrastructure will use Appendix 17.17 Training Matrix to manage the electrical training requirements. As a minimum, all safety observers shall have the same level of training and qualifications as the person they are observing. This includes EWP safety observers. If a climber is required, RTO is to verify training requirements.

In addition, VSC staff will require rail specific training requirements:

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Medical Certificate (Rail Category 3)

RIW card (Rail Industry Workers)

SARC (Safe Access to Rail Corridor)

Train Track Safety Awareness Level 1 Vic

Safety & Environmental Induction

All rail specific training are managed through our Rail Industry Worker portal managed by Metro Academy Australia.

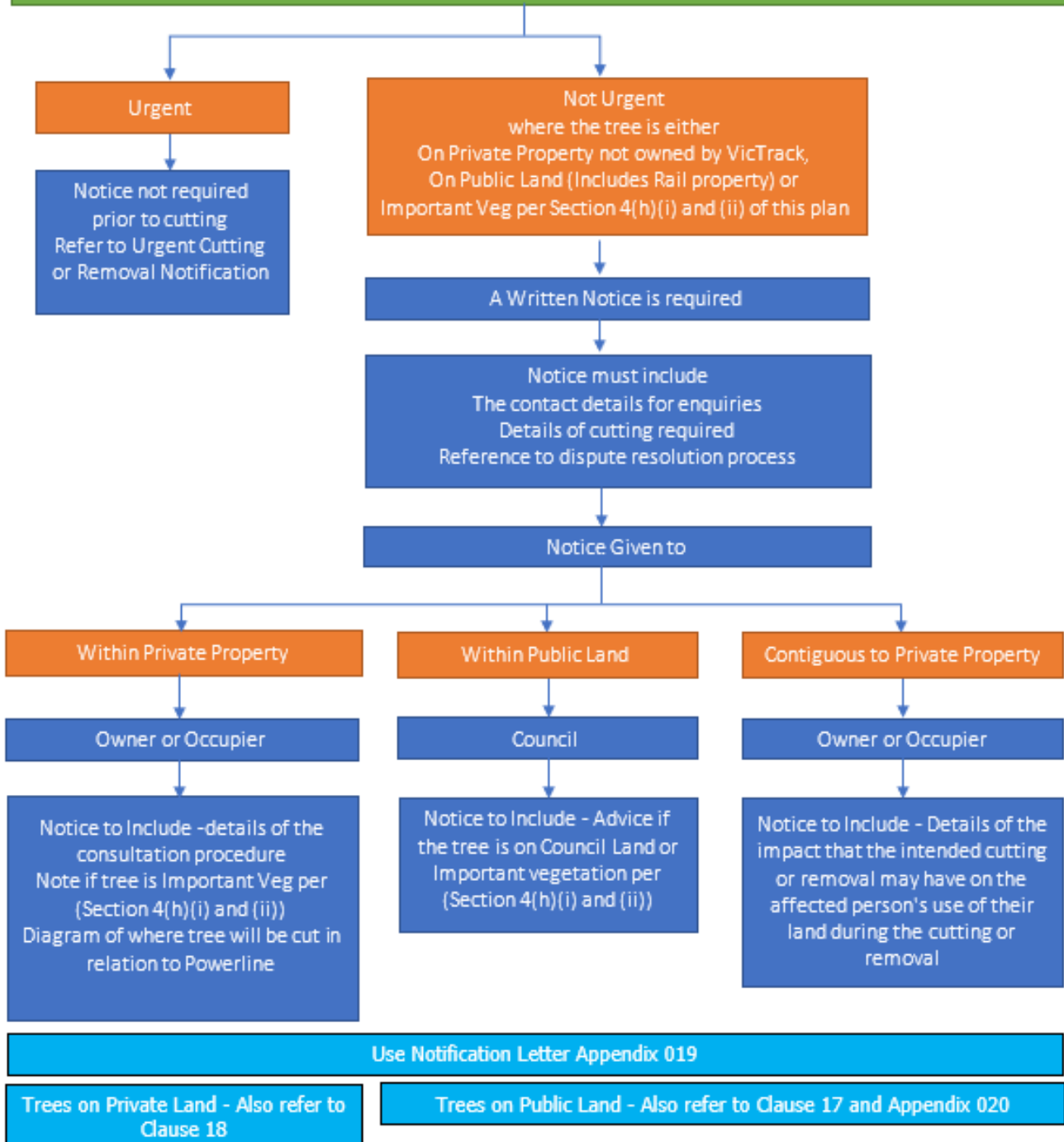
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(q) Notification and consultation procedures

The following procedures shall be followed for notification and consultation under each particular circumstance. A flow chart is provided to summarise the requirements with the detailed requirements listed below each flow chart. Clause 16 and Clause 18 are to be referred to for the notification requirements of tree works on private property. Clauses 16 and 17 are to be referred to for trees on public land.

Refer to clause 16 of the Electric Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020

Clause 16 Notification for cutting and removal to maintain the Minimum Clearance Space or Non-Urgent Hazard Trees



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- (1) This applies to a Group Manager Infrastructure when intending to cut or remove a tree to keep the Minimum Clearance Space clear of trees or a hazard tree that is-
 - (a) on private property that VicTrack neither owns nor occupies; or
 - (b) on public land; or
 - (c) a tree of cultural or environmental significance; or
 - (d) listed in a planning scheme to be of ecological, historical or aesthetic significance.
- (2) The Group Manager Infrastructure must give a written notice in accordance with this clause before cutting or removing the tree unless-
 - (a) VicTrack is responsible for the tree and
 - (b) the cutting or removal is urgently required for a reason set out in Urgent Pruning, 4(j)(i) in this plan.

Note: in writing can be met by means of an electronic communication.

- (3) A written notice given under subclause (2) must be given to-
 - (a) if the tree is within the boundary of private property-an owner or occupier of the property; or
 - (b) if the tree is on land that is managed by a Council that is not the responsible person-that Council; or
 - (c) if the tree is on land that is contiguous to private property and the use of that property may be affected during the cutting or removal-an owner or occupier of that property.
- (4) A written notice given under subclause (2) must include the following information-
 - (a) the contact details of the Group Manager Infrastructure, including the contact details for all enquiries regarding vegetation and the intended cutting or removal;
 - (b) details of the intended cutting or removal;
 - (c) advice that the Group Manager Infrastructure has procedures for resolving disputes and details on how to obtain access to the procedures.
- (5) A written notice given under subclause (2) must include the following additional information-
 - (a) if the notice is given to an owner or occupier of private property in accordance with subclause (3)(a)-
 - i. details of the consultation procedure that the Group Manager Infrastructure will follow; and
 - ii. details of whether the tree to be cut or removed is-
 - (A) a tree of cultural or environmental significance; or
 - (B) listed in a planning scheme to be of ecological, historical or aesthetic significance; and
 - iii. if the tree is intended to be cut, a diagram that shows-
 - (A) the tree and where the electric line is in relation to the tree; and
 - (B) where the tree will be cut;
 - (b) if the notice is given to a Council in accordance with subclause (3)(b)-details of whether the tree to be cut or removed is-
 - i. on public land; or
 - ii. a tree of cultural or environmental significance; or
 - iii. listed in a planning scheme to be of ecological, historical or aesthetic significance;
 - (c) if the notice is given to an owner or occupier of private property in accordance with subclause (3)(c)-details of the impact that the intended cutting or removal may have on the affected person's use of their land during the cutting or removal.

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- (6) A written notice given under subclause (2) must specify one or more days on which, or a period during which, the Group Manager Infrastructure intends that the intended cutting or removal will commence.

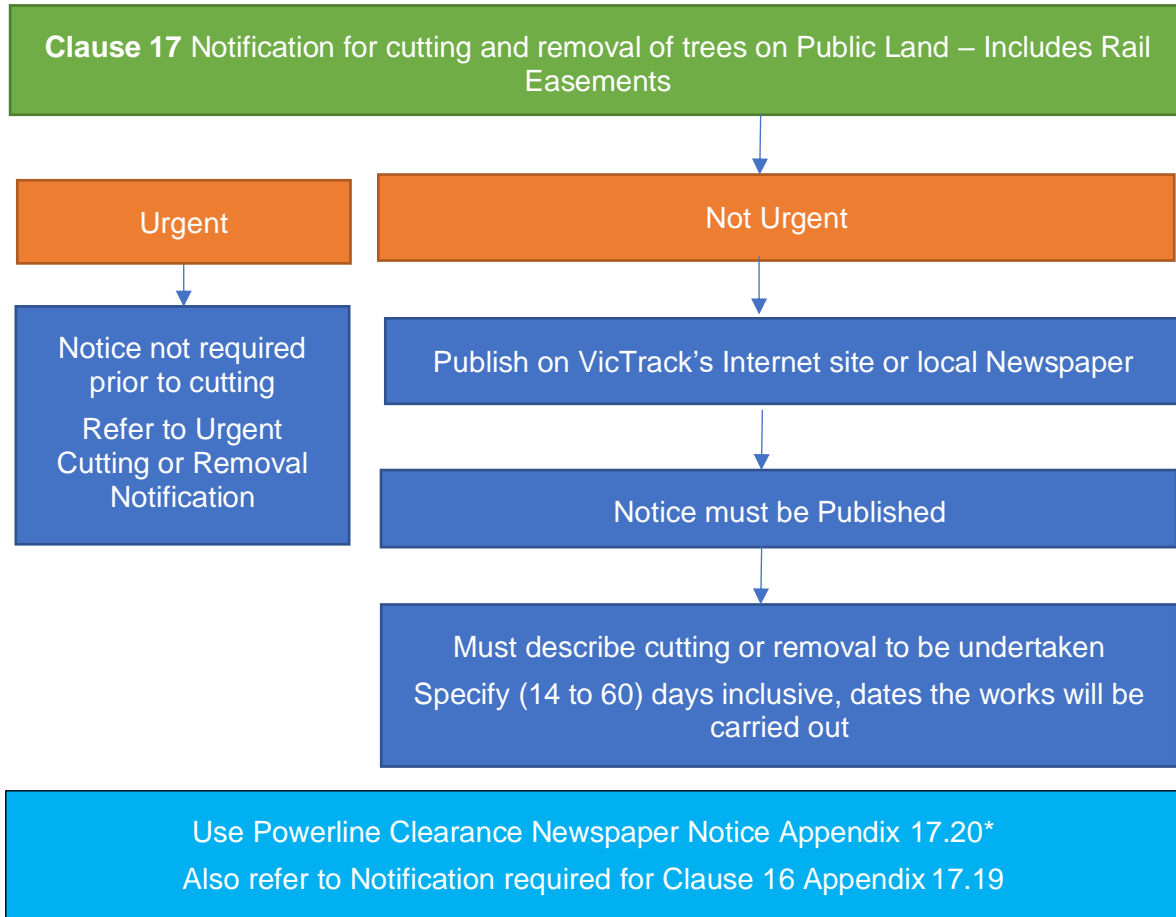
Note

If the Group Manager Infrastructure gives written notice under this clause, the Group Manager Infrastructure must not commence cutting or removal of the tree other than on a day or a period specified under subclause (6).

- (7) The Group Manager Infrastructure must not specify, under subclause (6), a day that is, or a period the first day of which is—
- (a) earlier than 14 days from the date of the notice; or
 - (b) later than 60 days from the date of the notice.

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Refer to Schedule 1 clause 17 of the Electric Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020



- (1) Applies to **Group Manager Infrastructure's** cutting or removing a tree that is on public land that is not privately owned.
- (2) The Group Manager Infrastructure must publish a written notice before cutting or removing the tree unless-
 - (b) the cutting or removal is urgently required for a reason set out for urgent cutting or removal.
- (3) A written notice must be published on VicTrack's Internet site or in a newspaper circulating generally in the locality of the land in which the tree is to be cut or removed.
- (4) A written notice published must--
 - (a) describe the cutting or removal that the Group Manager Infrastructure intends to undertake; and
 - (b) specify one or more days on which, or a period during which, the Group Manager Infrastructure intends that the intended cutting or removal will commence.

Note

If VicTrack publishes a notice under this section, the Group Manager Infrastructure must not cut or remove the tree other than on a day or period specified under subclause (4)(b).

- (5) The Group Manager Infrastructure must not specify, under subclause (4)(b), a day that is, or a period the first day of which is-

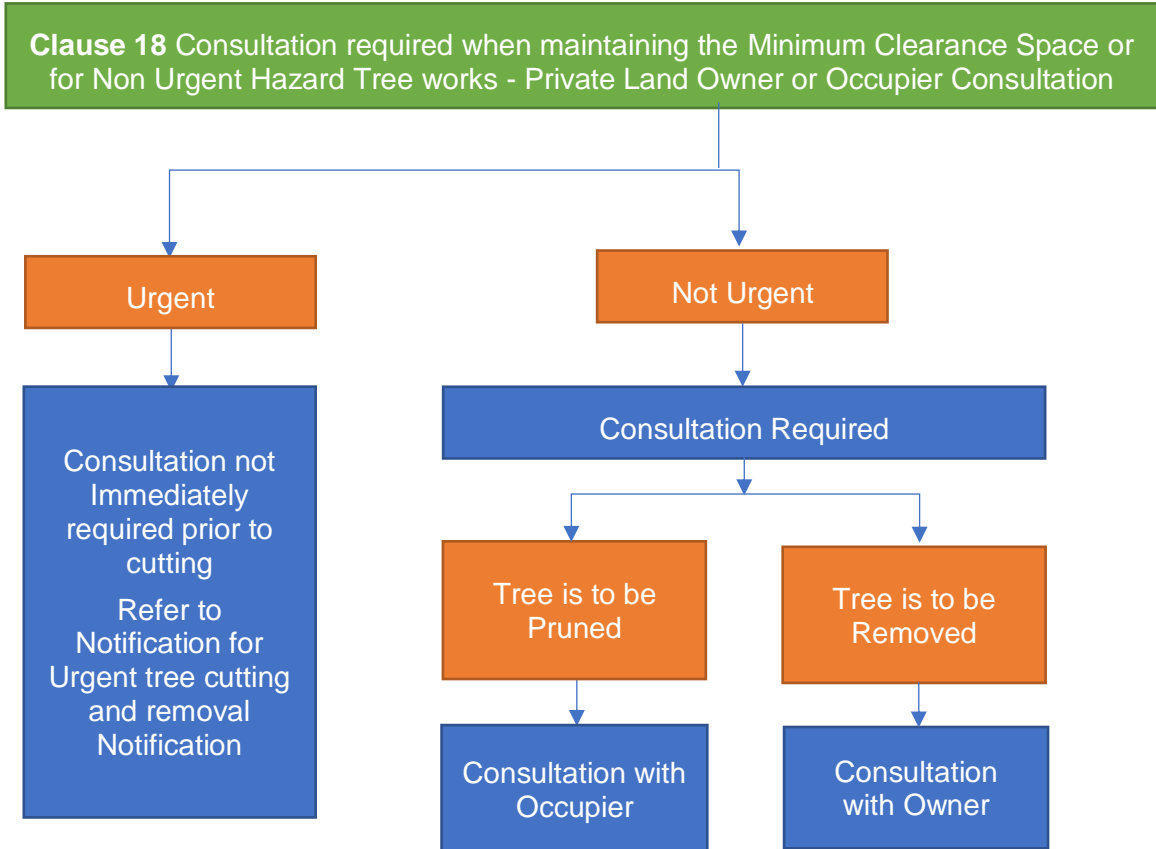
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- (a) earlier than 14 days after the date of the notice; or
- (b) later than 60 days after the date of the notice.

If the tree must be cleared because it meets the requirements in Urgent Pruning in section 4(j)(i) use notification process Clause 19. If the tree is not cleared before the 60 days notification period, a new notice is required.

*Appendix 17.20 contains the details required for the newspaper notice. This notice may be used on VicTrack's website instead of a newspaper notice as long as all elements of the notice are published.

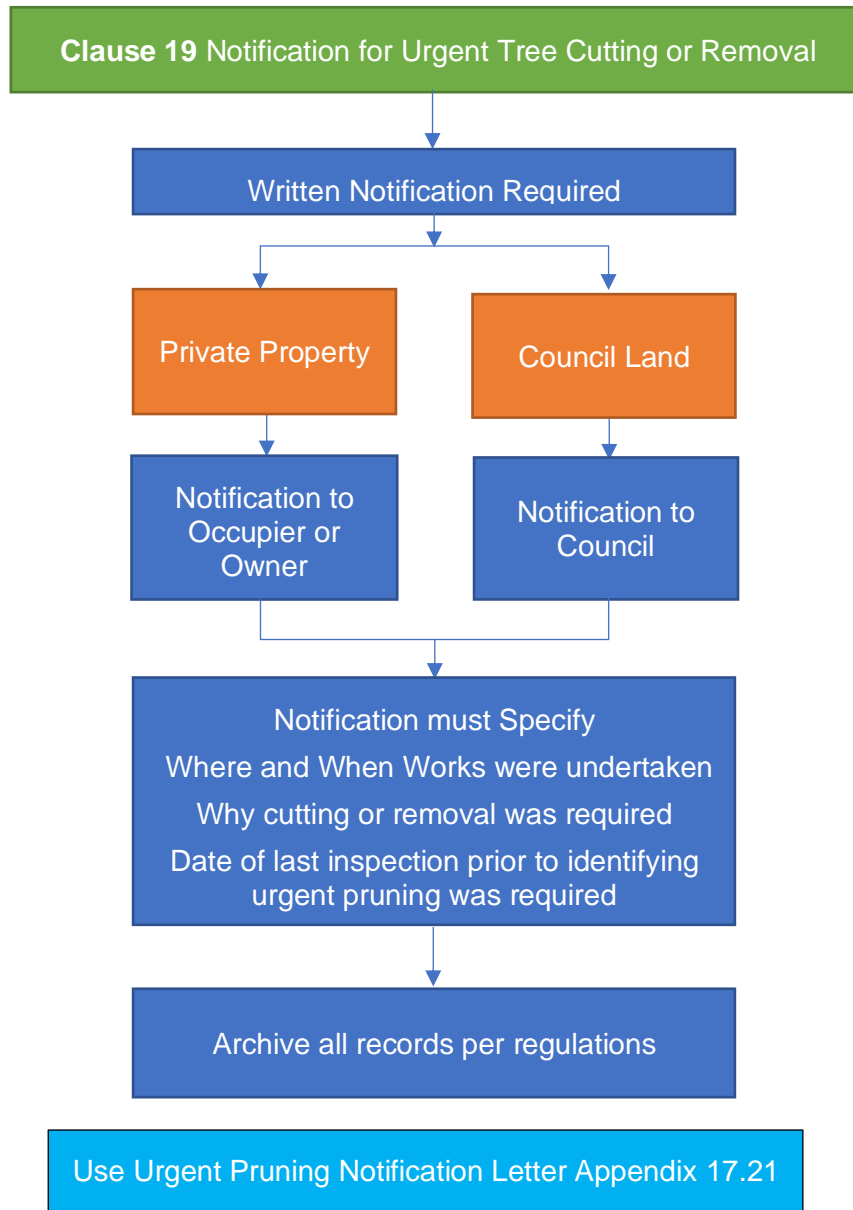
Refer to Schedule 1 clause 18 of the Electric Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020



- (1) This clause applies to Group Manager Infrastructures when intending to cut or remove a tree to maintain the Minimum Clearance Space or a Hazard tree that is within the boundary of a private property which VicTrack neither occupies nor owns.
- (2) The Group Manager Infrastructure must consult as required by clause (3) before cutting or removing the tree unless-
 - (a) VicTrack is responsible and
 - (b) the cutting or removal is urgently required for a reason set out in urgent pruning, 4(j)(i) in this plan.
- (3) For the purposes of subclause (2), The Group Manager Infrastructure must consult-
 - (a) if the tree is to be cut within the boundary of private property-an occupier of the property; or
 - (b) if the tree is to be removed-an owner of the property.

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Refer to Schedule 1 clause 19 of the Electric Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020



- (1) This clause applies to Group Manager Infrastructures undertaking any cutting or removal that is urgently required:
- (a) As a result of encroachment or growth of trees that was not anticipated in this plan; or
 - (b) as a result of a tree falling or becoming damaged so that it is required to be cut or removed to maintain the Minimum Clearance Space; or
 - (c) because a suitably qualified arborist has:
 - i. assessed the tree having regard to foreseeable local conditions; and
 - ii. advised the Group Manager Infrastructure that the tree, or any part of the tree, is likely to imminently fall onto or otherwise come into contact with an electric line; or
 - (d) during the fire danger period declared under the Country Fire Authority Act 1958.

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- (2) The Group Manager Infrastructure, as soon as practicable after completing the cutting or removal, must give written notice of that cutting or removal to:
- (a) If the tree that was cut or removed was within the boundary of private property-an owner or occupier of the property; or
 - (b) if the tree that was cut or removed was on land that is managed by a Council and not by VicTrack-the Council.
- (3) A written notice given under subclause (2) must specify:
- (a) where and when the cutting or removal was undertaken; and
 - (b) why the cutting or removal was required; and
 - (c) the date of the last inspection of the span of the electric line in relation to which the cutting or removal was required before it was identified that the urgent cutting or removal was required.
- (4) The Group Manager Infrastructure must keep a record of a written notice given under subclause (2) and record stored as required by regulations.

Notes

- (5) The Group Manager Infrastructure must not remove the tree unless:
- (a) the tree has fallen or has become damaged and is to be removed to keep the Minimum Clearance Space for an electric line span free of trees; or
 - (b) a suitably qualified arborist has-
 - i. assessed the tree having regard to foreseeable local conditions; and
 - ii. advised the Group Manager Infrastructure that the tree is likely to imminently fall onto or otherwise come into contact with an electric line.

(r) a procedure for the independent resolution of disputes relating to electric line clearance

If the vegetation is identified as being not compliant, the vegetation will be treated and cleared as per the urgent pruning process.

All enquiries should be managed to avoid disputes or complaints if reasonable to do so. Disputes should be resolved as per the following process however at any stage an affected person may choose to raise a complaint via VicTrack's formal complaints handling procedure.

<https://www.VicTrack.com.au/about/contact-us>

For the purposes of dispute resolution, the following responsible person may be contacted in conformance with the requirements set out in this section.

Name:	David Rowley
Position:	Group Manager Infrastructure
Address:	Level 8, 1010 Latrobe Street Docklands Vic 3008
Telephone:	(03) 9619 1111

Disputes between VicTrack and affected persons or stakeholders will be managed in line with the following process.

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First level of contact - The contractor field employee endeavours to resolve any disputes arising from the execution of their duties in a fair and reasonable manner. Disputes cost time and money and reflect poorly on VicTrack and the contractor's reputation. Disputes may be the result of a breakdown in communication prior to works or as a result of dissatisfaction with works.

Every attempt should be made to settle the dispute at the first point of contact to avoid unnecessarily escalating the incident. The contractor employee should explore all options within their authority in the consultation phase of the process in attempting to avoid disputes.

Reference to the Group Manager Infrastructure – Where a dispute cannot be settled, the contractor employee will notify the Group Manager Infrastructure and provide a detailed briefing. Any correspondence from the affected person will be logged in the contractor quality system for response tracking. The Group Manager Infrastructure will review the dispute and explore all practical options at his disposal. If under the circumstances the Group Manager Infrastructure is able to offer any further alternatives to what has been offered, these will be presented to the affected person by the contractor employee or the Group Manager Infrastructure if it is considered appropriate.

Reference to the Group Manager Infrastructure and Executive General Manager Property Group - If the options identified by the Group Manager Infrastructure require higher management approval or if it is beyond the Group Manager Infrastructure's delegated level of authority, a detailed proposal will be presented to the Executive General Manager Property Group for approval. If all options offered are unacceptable to the affected person the Executive General Manager Property Group, shall consider the risks associated with the outstanding vegetation clearance in determining the final resolution of issue.

Reference to arboricultural advisors - While all contractor employees have had training in tree identification, pruning techniques and tree physiology some special situations may require greater expertise. Advice may be sought from an arborist where the dispute requires an expert third party opinion on a matter relating to the tree or trees in question. Requests for this advice should be passed to the Group Manager Infrastructure who can arrange advice or provide contact details. The advice may be based on photographs and description supported by specimen leaves and fruit of the tree, or it may require a site visit by the expert arborist. Copies of reports should be forwarded to the Group Manager Infrastructure for compilation. The reports will be made available to the contractor employees and across VicTrack for reference.

Resolution - If agreement is reached then the agreed course of action shall be recorded in an agreement and signed by the Affected Person or Stakeholder. To avoid any future dispute where the agreed action is to take place over a period of time a notation referring to the agreement should be made in the Tree Management System database/Significant Tree register.

No resolution - If no agreement is reached, the parties in dispute may choose to refer the case to Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) or The Energy and Water Ombudsman (EWOV), as appropriate, for a mechanism for resolution. If the non-completion of the disputed work presents a fire or safety risk, the Group Manager Infrastructure may be obliged by the regulations to enter the property and complete the work.

Any customers who consider they have been poorly treated under this process are welcome to approach the EWOV for recourse. The EWOV is the last industry advocate available to settle tree related disputes. Further recourse may be available through the legal system.

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Name:	Energy Safe Victoria
Address:	PO Box 262 Collins Street West VIC 8007
Telephone:	1800 800 158
e-mail:	info@esv.vic.gov.au

Name:	Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) Ltd
Address:	GPO Box 469 Melbourne 3001
Telephone:	1800 500 509
e-mail:	ewovinfo@ewov.com.au

Information on how we handle complaints is on the VicTrack website. Refer to Appendix 17.16 for Dispute Resolution Process used for ELCMP.

Address:	Level 8, 1010 Latrobe Street Docklands Vic 3008
Telephone:	(03) 9619 1111
Normal business hours:	Monday–Friday, 8.30am–5pm
Weblink:	https://victrack.com.au/get-help/complaints

(S) if Energy Safe Victoria has granted an exemption under regulation 11 relating to a requirement of the Code, details of the exemption or a copy of the exemption.

VicTrack has not requested and will not request an exemption.

6. Obligations relating to the management plan

The following sections are as per Regulation 10 of the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020.

1 - This regulation applies in relation to the management plan that a responsible person is required to prepare under regulation 9.

N/A.

2 - The responsible person must provide a copy of the management plan to Energy Safe Victoria within 14 days after a written request from Energy Safe Victoria or such longer period as specified by Energy Safe Victoria in the written request.

VicTrack will provide a copy of the plan when requested.

3 - The responsible person, if requested in writing to do so by Energy Safe Victoria, must provide further information or material in respect of the management plan within 14 days after the written request or such longer period as specified by Energy Safe Victoria in the written request.

VicTrack will provide further information or material to ESV within 14 days or as requested and specified by ESV.

4 - The responsible person must amend the management plan if instructed to do so in writing by Energy Safe Victoria within 14 days after the written instruction or such longer period as specified by Energy Safe Victoria in the written instruction.

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VicTrack will amend this plan within 14 days or in a timeframe as instructed.

5 - The responsible person must not contravene a requirement of the management plan if the management plan is approved by Energy Safe Victoria.

VicTrack will not contravene the requirements within this approved plan if ESV approves this plan.

6 - The responsible person must ensure that a copy of the current management plan is published on the responsible person's Internet site.

The Electric Line Clearance Management Plan is published on VicTrack's website at <https://victrack.com.au/about/publications>. The ELCMP will be published on the website prior to 1 July of each year.

7. Exemptions

The following sections are as per Regulation 11 of the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020.

1 - Energy Safe Victoria may exempt a responsible person from any of the requirements of these Regulations subject to any conditions specified by Energy Safe Victoria.

This clause is not applicable to VicTrack at this time. There are no exemptions in place. If an exemption is required in the future, this ELCMP will be updated to reflect the proper process to be followed. The exemption will also be published on the VicTrack website, and a link provided here.

2 - A responsible person who is granted an exemption under this regulation must comply with the conditions (if any) of the exemption.

This clause is not applicable to VicTrack at this time. There are no exemptions in place. If an exemption is required in the future, this ELCMP will be updated to reflect proper process to be followed.

8. Clearance responsibilities (Schedule 1 of Regulations)

The following sections are as per Part 2, Division 1 of the Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance.

3 - Responsible person must keep Minimum Clearance Space clear of trees

(1) A responsible person must ensure that, at all times, no part of a tree for which the person has clearance responsibilities is within the Minimum Clearance Space for an electric line span.

and

(2) Subclause (1) is subject to clauses 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Subject to sub clauses 4, 5 6 and 7, VicTrack will ensure no part of any tree enters the Minimum Clearance Space.

4 - Exception to Minimum Clearance Space for structural branches around insulated low voltage electric lines - Exception 4 (E4)

Insulated low voltage electric lines (structural branches)

Incorporating Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020, Part 2, Division 1, Schedule 4

Responsibility

Exceptions to the required Minimum Clearance Space for insulated low voltage cables may occur in VicTrack's POELs. The Group Manager Infrastructure is responsible for managing and implementing all stages of this procedure.

Procedure

Prior to the commencement of the scheduled annual inspection, all previous years' open defects classed vegetation, will be provided to the inspector. During scheduled annual inspections, the inspector will record E4 in the inspection form where the span is an insulated LV line, and the branch is wider than 130mm at the point at which it enters the Minimum Clearance Space, and the branch is more than 150mm from the line if the span is $\leq 40\text{m}$ in length or 300mm from an Insulated Low Voltage Electrical Lines that is $>40\text{m}$ in length.

The Group Manager Infrastructure will determine if the branch is to be cleared or considered to be managed as an E4 tree.

If the branch is to be cleared the work instruction E4 will be crossed out and the branch will be trimmed as per normal works.

If the Group Manager Infrastructure decides to retain the branch, he / she will arrange for

- (1) A suitably qualified arborist to inspect the tree and advise if there are no structural defects that could cause the branch to fail and make contact with the line
- (2) Completes a risk assessment, using the Exception Risk Assessment Form Appendix 17.22, on the branch and implements the measures to mitigate the risks identified.
- (3) If the above items are completed and meet the requirements; the records of the above assessments are kept for five years as per VicTrack's Archiving process and are available for use as required. The tree location will be listed in subsequent inspection requirements and inspected every 12 months.

Data collection

The following applies to instances of vegetation where an Exception 4 is being managed:

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The Work Instructions and Exception Risk Assessments are recorded as per directions above. They are stored as required by regulations. The Group Manager Infrastructure will also ensure an E4 is recorded against the electronic record of the span containing the Exception 4 vegetation.

Clearance assessments

Assessments for trees under this category are assessed by a suitably qualified arborist who will visually estimate the current clearance and apply an additional distance for estimated growth. The suitably qualified arborist will present the Group Manager Infrastructure with documents to verify the requirements as listed in the Exception Risk Assessment Form Appendix 17.22 are met.

Exception audits

Vegetation managed under this process will be audited concurrently with Inspection quality audits Appendix 17.7. The auditor will visually assess the tree from the ground and ensure that he / she is satisfied that the clearances specified in the assessments are satisfactory and an appropriate safety outcome has been achieved.

5 - Exception to Minimum Clearance Space for small branches around insulated low voltage electric lines - Exception 5 (E5)

Insulated low voltage electric lines (small branches)

incorporating Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations, Part 2, Division 1, Schedule 5

Responsibility

The Group Manager Infrastructure is responsible for managing and implementing all stages of this procedure.

Procedure

VicTrack will refer to its tree database date records when pruning works are undertaken. Branches will not be required to be cleared from Insulated low voltage lines where an inspection identifies the presence of branches that meet the requirements for exception as outlined in Schedule 1, Part 2, Section 5 of the Code:

Are less than 10 millimetres wide at the point where it entered the Minimum Clearance Space, and
Vegetation clearance works were recorded in the previous 12 months.

6 - Exception to Minimum Clearance Space for small branches growing under uninsulated low voltage electric lines in Low Bushfire Risk Areas - Exception 6 (E6)

Uninsulated low voltage electric lines

incorporating Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020, Part 2, Division 1, Clause 6.

Responsibility

Exceptions to the required Minimum Clearance Space for Uninsulated Low Voltage cables in the LBRA may occur around VicTrack POELs. The Group Manager Infrastructure is responsible for managing and implementing all stages of this procedure.

Procedure

Prior to the commencement of the scheduled annual inspection, all previous years E6 classed vegetation will be provided to the inspector. During scheduled annual inspections, the inspector will record E6 on the Work Instruction Street where a branch is identified as meeting the Exception 6 Criteria listed below.

The Group Manager Infrastructure will determine if the branch is to be cleared or considered to be managed as an E6 tree. If the branch is to be cleared the work instruction E6 will be crossed out and

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the branch will be trimmed as per normal works. If the Group Manager Infrastructure decides to retain the branch, they will ensure all trees that apply to this section meet the following criteria:

Exception 6 criteria

- (a) The electric line is uninsulated low voltage in the LBRA and
- (b) the branch is less than 10 millimetres wide at the point at which it enters the Minimum Clearance Space and is no more than 500 millimetres inside the Minimum Clearance Space; and
- (c) the point at which the branch originates is below the height of the electric line; and
- (d) in the case of a branch that comes within the Minimum Clearance Space around the middle 2 thirds of the span, the span is fitted with-
 - i. one conductor spreader if the length of the span does not exceed 45 metres; or
 - ii. two conductor spreaders if the length of the span exceeds 45 metres; and

Note:

A spreader is not required to be fitted to the span if the branch comes within the Minimum Clearance Space around the first or last sixth of the span.

- a. within the last 14 months-
 - i. a suitably qualified arborist has inspected the tree of which the branch is a part; and
 - ii. the Group Manager Infrastructure has completed an assessment of the risks posed by the branch using the Exception Risk Assessment Form Appendix 17.22; and
 - iii. the Group Manager Infrastructure has implemented measures to effectively mitigate the identified risks.

6.1 If the above item is completed and meets the requirements; the records of assessments are retained in line regulations. The tree location will be listed for review by the relevant inspector.

6.2 If (1) or (2) or are not completed by 31 December, the vegetation will be cleared as per routine clearing.

Data collection

The following applies to instances of vegetation where an Exception 6 is being managed:

The Work Instructions and Exception Risk Assessments are recorded as per directions above. They are stored as required by regulations. The Group Manager Infrastructure will also ensure an E6 is recorded against the electronic record of the span containing the Exception 6 vegetation.

Clearance assessments

Assessments for trees under this category are assessed by a suitably qualified arborist who will visually estimate the current clearance and apply an additional distance for estimated growth. The suitably qualified arborist will present VicTrack with documents to verify the requirements as listed in the Exception Risk Assessment Form Appendix 17.22 are met.

Exception audits

Vegetation managed under this process will be audited concurrently with Inspection Quality Audits Appendix 17.7. The auditor will visually assess the tree from the ground and ensure that they are satisfied that the clearances specified in the assessments are satisfactory and an appropriate safety

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outcome has been achieved. All requirements in 6.1 and 6.2 must be complied with to meet this exception.

7 - Exception to Minimum Clearance Space for structural branches around uninsulated low voltage electric lines in Low Bushfire Risk Areas - Exception 7 (E7)

Uninsulated low voltage electric lines

incorporating Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020, Part 2, Division 1, Schedule 7

Responsibility

Exceptions to the required Minimum Clearance Space for Uninsulated Low Voltage cables in LBRA may occur when managing trees around POELs. The Group Manager Infrastructure is responsible for managing and implementing all stages of this procedure.

Procedure

Prior to the commencement of the scheduled annual inspection, all previous years' E7 classed vegetation will be provided to the inspector. During scheduled annual inspections, the inspector will record E7 on the Work Instruction Sheet where a branch is identified as meeting the criteria in (a) through to (e).

The Group Manager Infrastructure will determine if the branch is to be cleared or considered to be managed as an E7 tree.

If the branch is to be cleared the work instruction E7 will be crossed out and the branch will be trimmed as per normal works.

If the Unit Manger decides to retain the branch, they ensure all trees that apply to this section are:

- (a) the electric line is an uninsulated cable, low voltage electric line located in a Low Bushfire Risk Area; and
- (b) in the case of a branch that comes within the Minimum Clearance Space around the middle two-thirds of the span, the span is fitted with-
 - i. one conductor spreader if the length of the span does not exceed 45 metres; or
 - ii. two conductor spreaders if the length of the span exceeds 45 metres; and

Note

A spreader is not required to be fitted to the span if the branch comes within the Minimum Clearance Space around the first or last sixth of the span.

- (a) the branch is more than 130 millimetres wide at the point at which it enters the Minimum Clearance Space; and
- (b) the branch is no more than 500 millimetres inside the Minimum Clearance Space; and
- (c) within the last 14 months-
 - i. a suitably qualified arborist has inspected the tree of which the branch is a part; and
 - ii. the arborist has advised the Group Manager Infrastructure that the tree of which the branch is a part does not have any visible structural defect that could cause the branch to fall and make contact with the electric line; and
 - iii. the Group Manager Infrastructure has completed an assessment of the risks posed by the branch; and

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- iv. the Group Manager Infrastructure has implemented measures to effectively mitigate the identified risks.

7.1 If the above item is completed and meets the requirements; the records of the above assessments will be maintained in line with regulation. The tree location will be listed in subsequent inspections for review.

7.2 If (1) or (2) or are not completed by 31 December, the vegetation will be cleared as per routine clearing.

If the Group Manager Infrastructure leaves a branch within the Minimum Clearance Space for an electric line span in accordance with subclause (2) the Group Manager Infrastructure must keep records of the following matters in line with legislation-

- (a) each inspection referred to in subclause (2)(e)(i);
- (b) all advice referred to in subclause (2)(e)(ii);
- (c) each assessment referred to in subclause (2)(e)(iii);
- (d) all measures referred to in subclause (2)(e)(iv).

Data collection

The following applies to instances of vegetation where an Exception 7 is being managed:

The Work Instructions and Exception Risk Assessments are recorded as per the directions above. They are stored as required by regulations. The Group Manager Infrastructure will also ensure an E7 is recorded against the electronic record of the span containing the Exception 7 vegetation.

Clearance assessments

Assessments for trees under this category are assessed by a suitably qualified arborist who will visually estimate the current clearance and apply an additional distance for estimated growth. The suitably qualified arborist will present the Group Manager Infrastructure with documents to verify the requirements as listed in the Exception Risk Assessment Form Appendix 17.22 are met.

Exception audits

Vegetation managed under this process will be audited concurrently with Inspection Quality Audits Appendix 17.7. The auditor will visually assess the tree from the ground and ensure that they are satisfied that the clearances specified in the assessments are satisfactory and an appropriate safety outcome has been achieved.

9 - Responsible person may cut or remove hazard tree (Schedule 2; Regulation 9)

- incorporating Schedule 9.

A hazard tree is a tree that:

a suitably qualified arborist has assessed the tree in regard to foreseeable conditions and advised the tree or part of the tree is likely to fail and will contact an electric line if this occurs.

All identified hazard trees are to be cleared to ensure compliance is maintained and in a time, that prevents the tree from entering the Minimum Clearance Space. Hazard trees are to be cleared only when it is safe to do so and if a Hazard tree cannot be removed in a timely manner, the VicTrack Group Manager Infrastructure is to be contacted to discuss other means of removal or powerline disconnection.

As part of the annual inspection, VicTrack will seek to identify vegetation infringing on Minimum Clearance Space. The inspection includes the hazard space outside the minimum clearance and regrowth spaces. Trees in the hazard space that are identified and require clearing will be cleared

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without further assessment if the tree is urgent or contains significant faults that are deemed to be a risk to the public.

In a situation where VicTrack identifies a tree that is likely to fall onto or otherwise come into contact with an electric line that is not urgent or a risk to the public, VicTrack will arrange an assessment of the tree using a suitably qualified arborist who holds the minimum qualification as outlined in the Training matrix Appendix 17.17. Note: For the purpose of this plan, a hazard tree is a tree that possesses hazardous faults which if not actioned, will negatively impact distribution assets. These trees may possess characteristics such as large cavities, severe decay, major cracks etc.

In situations where the arborist's assessment confirms the likelihood of contact with the electric line having regard to foreseeable local conditions including weather and around instability, VicTrack will remove or cut the hazard tree as per the Code. In the event of a hazard tree being identified as a culturally significant, environmentally significant or habitat tree, VicTrack will where possible minimise the impact on the tree or fauna as previously outlined, to ensure compliance with the requirements of the code, the schedule to the code or to make an unsafe situation safe.

Hazard trees that are found to *not* be the responsibility of VicTrack will be reported to the Group Manager Infrastructure by phone or email.

Trees reported by residents or other authorities will be recorded on VicTrack's data system. Trees reported that are VicTrack's responsibility will be actioned as required by this plan. Trees that are not VicTrack's responsibility will be recorded and forwarded to the other responsible person.

Notification of affected persons when clearing hazard trees is as per 4q of this plan:

For the notification requirements of non-urgent hazard tree clearing where the tree is either on private property not owned by VicTrack, on public land (Includes rail property) or the hazard tree is important vegetation as per section 4(h)(i) and (ii) of this plan use the flow chart Clause 16 notification for cutting and removal to maintain the Minimum Clearance Space or non-urgent hazard trees.

In addition, for the notification requirements of non-urgent hazard tree clearing on private land, also refer to the Flow chart Clause 18 consultation required when maintaining the Minimum Clearance Space or for hazard tree works - private land owner or occupier consultation.

And for the notification requirements of non-urgent hazard tree clearing on public land refer to the flow chart Clause 17 notification for cutting and removal of trees on public land – includes rail easements.

For the notification requirements of urgent hazard trees use the flow chart Clause 19 notification for urgent tree cutting or removal.

10 - Cutting of tree to comply with standard (AS4373)

This requirement is covered in Section 4j.

11 - Cutting or removal of indigenous or significant trees must be minimised

This requirement is covered in Section 4h.

12 - Cutting or removing habitat for threatened fauna

This requirement is covered in Section 4(j)(i).

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9. Clearance responsibilities - notification, consultation and dispute resolution

The following sections are as per Part 2, Division 3 of the Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance.

16 - Responsible person must provide notification before cutting or removing certain trees

This requirement is covered in Section 4q.

17 - Responsible person must publish notice before cutting or removing certain trees

This requirement is covered in Section 4q.

10. Clearance responsibilities - additional duties of responsible persons

The following sections are as per Part 2, Division 4 of the Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance.

20 - Duty relating to the safety of cutting or removal of trees close to an electric line

(2) An owner, operator or distribution company that is consulted by a Council under subclause (1) must provide advice to the Council on-

- (a) safe limits of approach to electric lines for cutting or removing the tree; and
- (b) safe methods for cutting or removing the tree.

Where concerns are raised in relation to the safety of tree cutting activities associated with maintaining vegetation clearances by a council inside of the declared area around VicTrack assets, VicTrack will provide advice on the safe limits of approach to electric lines for cutting or removing the tree and advice on the safe methods for cutting or removing the tree. The expectation is both parties arrive at a method that achieves compliance safely. Final recommendations will be provided to the Council in an email to be recorded in the VicTrack Property Group asset register.

Any council with safety concerns relating to clearing trees in the vicinity of VicTrack POELs can contact the Group Manager Infrastructure on the following contact details:

Name:	David Rowley
Position:	Group Manager Infrastructure
Address:	Level 8, 1010 Latrobe Street Docklands Vic 3008
Telephone:	03 9619 1111

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The VicTrack POELs reside in the following Local Government Areas (LGA). VicTrack maintains a record of all of the contacts within these councils, including the organisation name, contact name and position and a contact number and email address.

Ararat Rural City Council	Golden Plains Shire Council	Mornington Peninsula Shire Council
Ballarat City Council	Greater Bendigo City Council	Mount Alexander Shire Council
Baw Baw Shire Council	Greater Geelong City Council	Northern Grampians Shire Council
Benalla Rural City Council	Hepburn Shire Council	Pyrenees Shire Council
Berrigan Shire Council (NSW)	Hindmarsh Shire Council	South Gippsland Shire Council
Brimbank City Council	Hobsons Bay City Council	Southern Grampians Shire Council
Buloke Shire Council	Horsham Rural City Council	Strathbogie Shire Council
Campaspe Shire Council	Indigo Shire Council	Surf Coast Shire Council
Cardinia Shire Council	Latrobe City Council	Wangaratta Rural City Council
Casey City Council	Loddon Shire Council	Warrnambool City Council
Central Goldfields Shire Council	Macedon Ranges Shire Council	Wellington Shire Council
Colac Otway Shire Council	Melbourne City Council	West Wimmera Shire Council
Corangamite Shire Council	Mildura Rural City Council	Wodonga City Council
East Gippsland Shire Council	Mitchell Shire Council	Yarriambiack Shire Council
Glenelg Shire Council	Moira Shire Council	

11. Responsibilities and accountabilities

Specific responsibilities and accountabilities include:

Responsibility	
Name of organisation	Victorian Rail Track (VicTrack)
Name	Chris Olds
Position	Chief Executive Officer
Responsibilities	Overall responsibility of VicTrack; Responsible Person
Address	Level 8, 1010 Latrobe Street Docklands Vic 3008
Telephone	03 9619 1111
Name	Andrew Santana
Position	Executive General Manager Property Group
Responsibilities	Responsible for the preparation of the management plan
Address	Level 8, 1010 Latrobe Street Docklands Vic 3008
Telephone	03 9619 1111
Name	David Rowley
Position	Acting Group Manager Infrastructure
Responsibilities	Responsible for carrying out the management plan
Address	Level 8, 1010 Latrobe Street Docklands Vic 3008
Telephone	03 9619 1111

12. Legislative and regulatory framework

Acts of legislation, standards or regulations to which this document relates:

- *Electricity Safety Act 1998*
- Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020
- Electricity Safety (General) Regulations 2019
- *Code of Practice on electrical safety for the work on or near high voltage electrical apparatus 2017 (The Blue Book)*
- *Victorian Traction Industry Electrical Safety Rules 2019 (The Orange Book)*
- ESV Electrical safety rules for vegetation management work near overhead powerlines by non-electrical workers (the ESV Safety Rules)

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13. Reference documents

This procedure should be read and applied in conjunction with the following documents:

Document ID	Document Title
AM-SP 508	Fire Prevention and Vegetation Management Procedure

14. Document review and approval

Delegation	Name	Position	Version	Date
Owner	Andrew Santana	Executive General Manager Property Group	3.0	26/03/20204
Reviewers	Louise Reynolds	Copywriter & Content Specialist	3.0	22/03/2024
	David Rowley	Group Manager Infrastructure	3.0	26/03/2026
	Janice Smith	Acting Asset Systems & Compliance Manager	3.0	29/02/2024
Approver	Chris Olds	Chief Executive Officer	3.0	26/03/2024

15. Document history

Version	Amendment description	Author	Date
Version 1.0	Initial Plan to comply with the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020	Janice Smith	28/11/2022
Version 2.0	Review and update to reflect ELCMP is for 2023-2024	Janice Smith	03/03/2023
Version 3.0	Review and update to reflect ELCMP is for 2024-2025	Janice Smith	22/03/2024

16. Review period

This procedure will be reviewed every year by the Document Owner or amended as appropriate.

Revisions are made by replacement of single pages, sections or reissue of the complete ELCMP as required.

17. Appendices

Note: Appendices contain key records (forms and documents) that are generated by the plan. Some Appendices may not contain documents or completed records at time of issue as they may be dependent on work being done during the program. These records will be updated and placed in the Appendices as they are generated for the program and will be available as applicable to the time of any compliance audits.

Number	Description
17.1	ELCMP Review Process and Authorisation
17.2	Audit Program
17.3	Objectives and KPIs Audit
17.4	Health and Safety Audit
17.5	Plant and Equipment Audit - EWP
17.6	Plant and Equipment Audit – Tipper/Chipper
17.7	Inspection Quality Audit
17.8	Cutting Quality Audit
17.9	Corrective Action Report
17.10	Induction Checklist
17.11	Daily Plant Safety Checklist
17.12	Network Area Map and LBRA Example
17.13	Code Compliance Audit
17.14	Inspection Work Instruction Sheet
17.15	Daily Work Sheet
17.16	Dispute Resolution Process
17.17	Training Matrix
17.18	Works Schedule
17.19	Notification letter
17.20	Newspaper Notification
17.21	Urgent Pruning Notification
17.22	Exception Risk Assessment Form