

# Private Overhead Electric Lines

## Safety and Responsibility



# Are your Private Overhead Electric Lines Safe?

They are your responsibility  
to maintain.

Customer Service Centre  
1300 131 871

Faults & Emergencies  
131 626

[www.jemena.com.au](http://www.jemena.com.au)

Energy Safe Victoria (ESV)  
(03) 9203 9700

Translator Services  
131 450



## Electric lines on your property are your responsibility

It is your responsibility to regularly inspect your private overhead electric lines, ensuring they are well maintained and clear of trees and branches. This will help ensure constant electricity supply and reduce the possibility of electrocution or bushfires.

## Which are your electric lines?

You are only responsible for your **Private Electric Lines**.

Private electric lines begin at the **Point of Supply** (see diagrams overleaf). After the point of supply all the wires, poles and any other electrical equipment on your property are your responsibility.

**High Voltage Lines** are the responsibility of JEN, even if they cross your property. We will keep them well maintained and free from vegetation.

If you are not sure whether your lines are private electric lines or high voltage lines please contact our Customer Service Centre on 1300 131 871.

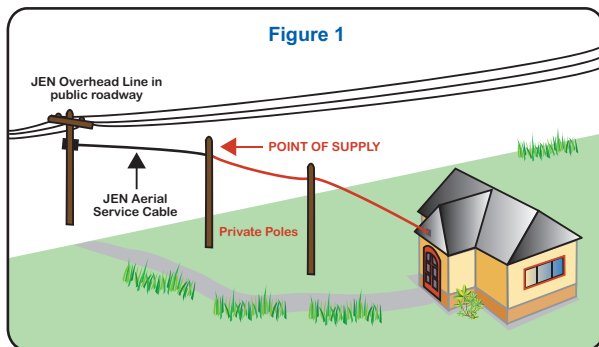
## Which are ours?

Jemena Electricity Networks (Vic) Ltd. (JEN) is the company licensed by the Victorian government to distribute electricity across Melbourne's north-western suburbs and is responsible for the operations and maintenance of the electricity poles, wires and meters in this area.

## Why you should keep private electric lines well maintained

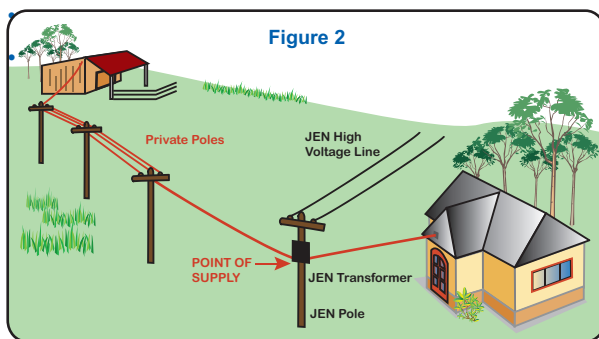
To ensure a safe and continuous electricity supply to your property and to avoid potentially costly litigation if a fault in your electrical installation causes injury or property damage.

## Which situation applies to you?



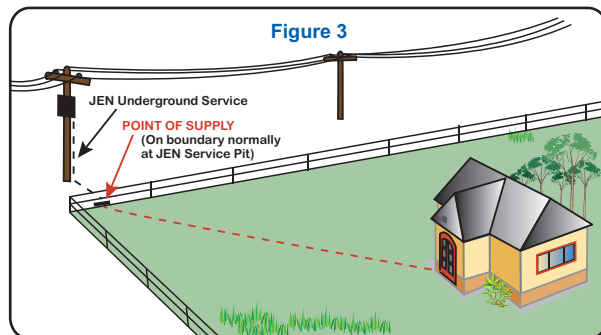
Jemena Electricity Networks (Vic) Ltd. (JEN) overhead line is in a public roadway. Where an overhead line is carried on to the land by private poles, the point of supply is the first private pole.

- **Private Overhead Electric Lines:** Vegetation clearing and maintenance is your responsibility.
- **JEN's Aerial Service Cable:** Maintenance and vegetation clearance on the public roadway is JEN's responsibility. Tree trimming on your property under the aerial service cable is your responsibility.



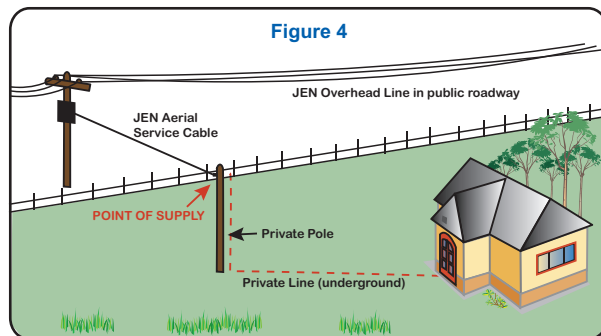
JEN's overhead line is on private land (most of JEN's lines have a transformer fitted near your building). The point of supply is where your lines are connected to JEN's pole.

- **Private Overhead Electric Lines:** Vegetation clearance and maintenance is your responsibility.
- **JEN's High Voltage Lines (attached above Transformer):** Vegetation clearance and maintenance is JEN's responsibility.



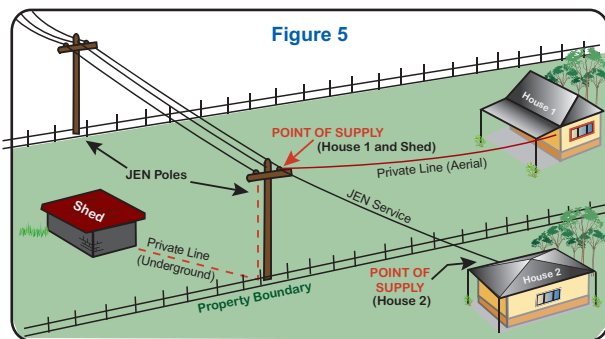
Underground cable from JEN's overhead lines is in a public roadway. The point of supply is at the service pit or where the cable crosses your property boundary.

- **Private Underground Electric Lines:** Maintenance is your responsibility.
- **JEN's Service (Underground Service Cable):** Maintenance is JEN's responsibility.



JEN's overhead line is in a public roadway. The overhead line is carried to a pole on private land. It then changes to an underground cable. The point of supply is where the aerial service cable is connected to the private pole.

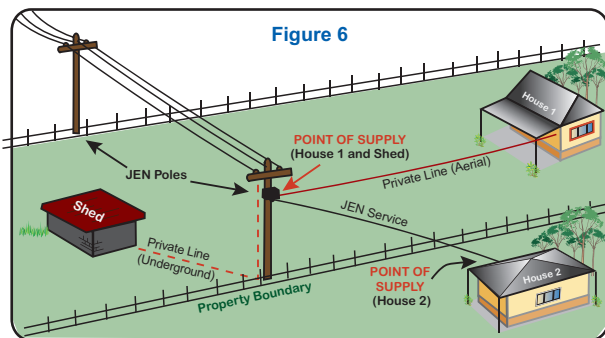
- **Private Underground Electric Lines and Private Poles:** Maintenance is your responsibility.
- **JEN's Aerial Service Cable:** Maintenance and tree trimming in the public roadway is JEN's responsibility, however the vegetation clearance on your property under the aerial service cable is your responsibility.



JEN's overhead line is on private land. The point of supply for the first house (and shed) is where the private lines are connected to the JEN pole.

However, the second house is situated across a property boundary, so a JEN service is connected straight to the house. The point of supply is where the JEN service is connected to the house.

- **First House Private Overhead Electric Line and Private Underground Line (to Shed):** Maintenance and vegetation clearance is your responsibility.
- **JEN's Overhead Service to Second House:** Vegetation clearance is your responsibility. Maintenance is JEN's responsibility.



The only difference between this situation and the one above (Fig.5) is a transformer is fitted on the JEN pole.

Same rules apply:

- **First House Private Overhead Electric Line and Private Underground Line (to Shed):** Maintenance and vegetation clearance is your responsibility.
- **JEN's Overhead Service to Second House:** Vegetation clearance is your responsibility. Maintenance is JEN's responsibility.

## How to look after Electric Lines.

### 1. Inspecting Lines

Inspect your private electric lines annually or ask a registered electrical contractor (electrician) to do it for you. Use binoculars or a telescope to inspect cable insulation (covering).

**Warning: Under no circumstances climb a pole or approach the wires yourself. Contact with live wires can kill. Tree branches touching lines may also be live. Repairs MUST always be carried out by a registered electrical contractor.**

### 2. Keep Trees Clear of Electric Lines

For trees which already exist near electric lines, advice should be sought from our Customer Service Centre on 1300 131 871 before you attempt to remove or trim them.

Private overhead electric lines can be damaged by contact with trees and overhead limbs. Falling branches may cause the lines to clash or fall to the ground. This could start a bushfire or result in someone being electrocuted.

### 3. Minimum Horizontal and Vertical Clearance Required

In general, the minimum clearance space for vegetation required for private overhead electric lines is as per the table below:

|                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| Insulated Wires | 1 metre  |
| Bare Wires      | 2 metres |

The exact minimum clearance space required for vegetation is as per the current Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2010. These can be viewed on the website of the Victorian Electricity Safety Regulator, Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) [www.esv.vic.gov.au](http://www.esv.vic.gov.au).

Energy Safe Victoria may also be consulted for advice or clarification on (03) 9203 9700 or [www.esv.vic.gov.au](http://www.esv.vic.gov.au).

## Council Permits

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

## How JEN will help

JEN may inspect your electrical installation (or any part of it) at any time. If a dangerous situation is discovered, we may disconnect electricity supply without prior notice. We may also check private poles and overhead lines. This will not reduce in any way the need for you to inspect and arrange necessary repairs and maintenance.

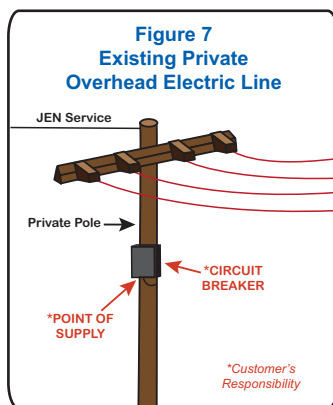
## Total Fire Ban

On days of total fire ban, JEN may disconnect defective private overhead electric lines from its supply mains. This will further reduce the risk of fire. Reconnection will occur only after the severe weather conditions have subsided and charges may apply.

## Circuit Breakers

When an electrician carries out maintenance on your private electric line, a CIRCUIT BREAKER must be fitted to your line. A circuit breaker is a switch installed at the start of your private electric line to switch off power whenever necessary, for example, during a high fire danger period.

The circuit breaker will 'trip' (switch off automatically) only under the same conditions as a fuse would blow.



A circuit breaker cannot be relied on for any greater electrical protection than a fuse. Should a circuit breaker 'trip', you may be able to restore electricity supply without waiting for a JEN representative to attend.

**CAUTION:** *Where a circuit breaker has been switched off to isolate supply for **VEGETATION CLEARANCE**, prove that the private overhead electric line has been isolated before starting work.*

## Underground electric lines are a better choice

Should your overhead electric lines be in a bushfire risk area and need substantial repair, JEN may direct you to replace them with an **Underground Cable**.

An underground cable is far safer than an overhead line. It virtually eliminates the risk of starting a bushfire, and the danger of electrocution through contact with tractors and other farm equipment is minimised.

Underground cables are more reliable, and are not damaged by storms or weather and may even improve the look of your property. Overhead electric lines continually need maintenance, whereas underground cables require no vegetation clearance. This saves time and money. For these reasons we recommend you make plans for the eventual conversion to underground electric lines in accordance with the Electricity Safety (Installations) Regulations 2009 - regulation 403.

If electricity is supplied from a roadway outside your property, JEN will arrange for the installation of an underground cable to the 'point of supply' at your property boundary. (See Figure 3).

## Things to look for

If you answer **YES** to any of the following questions, your electric line may be in need of urgent attention. Remove offending tree limbs and have a registered electrical contractor check the line and carry out repairs without delay.

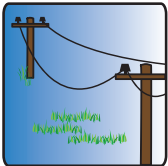
Tick the box to check where the dangers are on your property.

### 1. If any section of your private overhead electric lines has more than one bare wire:



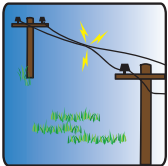
Is there any vegetation within 2.0m (7ft.) of any bare wire?

☐ Yes ☐ No



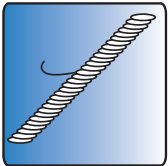
Is any wire hanging much lower than other wires in the same section?

☐ Yes ☐ No



Has anyone seen the wires clash together in high winds?

☐ Yes ☐ No



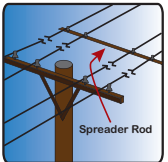
Are there any broken strands of wire?

☐ Yes ☐ No



Are any crossarms split, loose or not square to the pole?

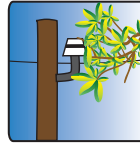
☐ Yes ☐ No



Are the wires physically separated with spreaders?

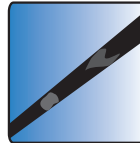
☐ Yes ☐ No

### 2. If any section of your private overhead electric lines has only one insulated line:



Is there any vegetation within 1.0m of the insulated cable?

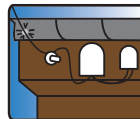
☐ Yes ☐ No



Are there any gaps, cracks or pieces missing from the insulation (covering) of the cable?

☐ Yes ☐ No

### 3. For both types of private overhead electric lines:



Are any wires rubbing on metal edges of terminating structures, such as fascia, gutters or down pipes?

☐ Yes ☐ No



Are poles rotting at or just below ground level? (Dig carefully all around the pole to check, but beware of any underground wiring to the pole.)

☐ Yes ☐ No



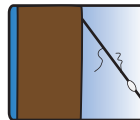
Are any poles leaning excessively?

☐ Yes ☐ No



Are any brackets pulling away from the pole(s) or buildings? Are any other fittings crooked or loose?

☐ Yes ☐ No



Are any stay (guy) wires loose or broken?

☐ Yes ☐ No



Are any wires not securely fastened to insulators?

☐ Yes ☐ No

## Legal Responsibility

Electricity customers have always been responsible by law for their private electric lines, either overhead or underground. To clarify this responsibility, the legislation was amended in June 2012.

The legislation defines the 'point of supply' and confirms your responsibility for maintenance of your private overhead electric lines including the need to keep vegetation clear of your lines.

A private electric line is described in the Electricity Safety Act 1998. Reference should also be made to the 'Victorian Electricity Supply Industry' Services and Installation Rules for construction and maintenance of private overhead electric lines.

If a fault in your electrical installation causes injury or property damage you could be involved in costly litigation.

In accordance with the relevant regulations, all electrical wiring work associated with the erection and maintenance of private overhead electric lines should be carried out by a Registered Electrical Contractor.

Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) may also be consulted for advice or clarification of your responsibilities.

**ESV:** (03) 9203 9700.

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ABN 82 064 651 083

