



Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao

National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Amendment 2025



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Authority

This amendment to a National Policy Statement is made by the Minister for the Environment under section 53(1) of the Resource Management Act 1991.

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1. Title

This is the National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Amendment 2025.

2. Commencement

This amendment to the National Policy Statement comes into force on 15 January 2026.

3. Principal instrument

This instrument amends the National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks 2008 (previously named National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission 2008).

4. Clause 1 Title amended

Replace clause 1 with:

“(1) This national policy statement is the National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks 2008 (previously named National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission 2008).”

5. Clause 2 Commencement amended

Replace clause 2 with:

“1.2 Commencement

(1) This National Policy Statement came into force on 10 April 2008.

(2) See Part 3 for timeframes for giving effect to this National Policy Statement.”

6. Clause 1.3 Application inserted

Insert new clause 1.3:

“1.3 Application

(1) This national policy statement applies to electricity network activities, including all electricity transmission and distribution networks and ancillary electricity network activities.

(2) This National Policy Statement applies across the whole of New Zealand.”

7. Clause 3 Interpretation amended

Replace the chapeau with:

“(1) In this National Policy Statement:”

Insert new definitions:

“ancillary electricity network activities (ancillary EN activities)” means all supporting and subsidiary activities necessary to provide for the EN and EN assets, including, but not limited to:

- (a) vegetation clearance and tree trimming;
- (b) earthworks and land disturbance;
- (c) construction, maintenance, repair and upgrading of access tracks, accessways, bridges and culverts; and
- (d) construction, maintenance, repair and upgrading of power supply, telecommunication cables and devices.

electricity distribution network (EDN) means all assets and activities that provide electricity distribution and that:

- (a) is owned or used by a person or body who is both an electricity distributor and an electricity operator;
- (b) comprise the network of distribution lines, cables (overhead, underground or submarine), switching stations, support structures, substations, transformers, kiosks, cabinets, connections to grid exit points, customer connections, and works used to distribute electricity from the electricity transmission network or generation activities; and
- (c) includes ancillary EN activities.

The EDN does not include the electricity transmission network (ETN).

electricity distribution network provider (EDN provider) means an electricity distributor and/or electricity operator.

electricity distributor as defined in section 2 of the Electricity Act 1992.

electricity network (EN) means the electricity transmission network (ETN) and the electricity distribution network (EDN).

electricity network activities (EN activities) means the construction, operation, maintenance, development, upgrading, replacement, decommissioning or removal of electricity network assets, and includes ancillary EN activities.

electricity network assets (EN assets) means the physical components of the EN and any physical components of ancillary EN activities that support operation of the EN.

electricity network line (EN line) means EN assets in the form of lines or cables that are used for, or associated with, the overhead, underground, or submarine transmission or distribution of electricity, including where attached to a structure or bridge, but does not include an EN substation.

electricity network resilience (EN resilience) means the capacity of the EN to absorb and recover from a shock or disruption, or adapt to changing conditions, while retaining an appropriate level of service as determined by the EN provider.

electricity operator as defined in section 2 of the Electricity Act 1992.

functional need has the meaning set out in the National Planning Standards 2019.

local authority has the meaning set out in the Act.

non-routine electricity network activities (non-routine EN activities) means:

- (a) the upgrading, rebuilding, or replacement of, or changes to, EN assets or EN activities, that are not defined as routine EN activities; or
- (b) the construction of new EN assets not carried out on or related to EN lines, or at an EN substation, that exist at the time of construction; or
- (c) new connections to electricity generation or demand activities upon request of a third party (other than Transpower New Zealand Limited or an electricity distributor); or
- (d) relocation or undergrounding of assets in order to enable urban or infrastructure development upon request of a third party (other than Transpower New Zealand Limited or an electricity distributor).

operational need has the meaning set out in the National Planning Standards 2019.

routine electricity network activities (routine EN activities) means:

- (a) activities required for, or associated with, the operation of existing EN assets; or
- (b) activities that replace an existing EN asset with a modern equivalent or substitute, where the replacement will not result in an increase in the nature, scale or intensity of the activity; or
- (c) maintenance, repair and upgrading of existing EN assets necessary to continue to deliver the same or a similar level of service; or
- (d) upgrading of existing EN assets necessary to improve resilience, where the upgrade will not result in an increase in the nature, scale or intensity of the activity; or
- (e) the removal, decommissioning or dismantling of EN assets; or
- (f) all activities identified as a permitted or controlled activity in any national environmental standards for electricity networks or similar standards; and
- (g) related ancillary EN activities to (a)-(f).

upgrading means improving the capacity, level of service, efficiency, safety, security, resilience, effectiveness or longevity of existing EN assets and includes the replacement, renewal, addition, expansion and intensification of existing EN assets.”

Revoke definition:

“National grid”

Replace definition of “Sensitive activities” with:

“Sensitive activities means activities that are susceptible to actual or potential adverse effects (such as noise, vibration, odour, glare, or emissions) generated by adjacent or nearby activities. In relation to the EN this means residential units (including visitor accommodation and retirement accommodation), care facilities, childcare facilities, schools, hospitals, custodial or supervised accommodation where residents are detained on site, papakāinga, marae, or place of worship.”

Replace definition of “decision-makers” with:

“decision-makers means any person exercising functions or powers under the Act.”

Replace definition of “Electricity transmission network, electricity transmission and transmission activities/ assets/infrastructure/resources/system” with:

“electricity transmission network (ETN) means all assets and activities that provide electricity transmission and that:

- (a) comprise the network of transmission lines, and cables (overhead, underground, and submarine, including the high-voltage direct current link), stations, and substations, support structures, facilities and works;
- (b) includes ancillary EN activities;
- (c) includes other works necessary to connect grid injection points and grid exit points to convey electricity;
- (d) is owned or used by Transpower New Zealand Limited; and
- (e) is commonly known as the National Grid.

The ETN does not include the electricity distribution network (EDN).”

8. Clause 1.5 Incorporation by reference inserted

Insert new clause 1.5:

“1.5 Incorporation by reference

Clause 2(1) of Schedule 1AA of the Act does not apply to any material incorporated by reference in this National Policy Statement.”

9. Clause 4 Matters of national significance revoked

Revoke clause 4.

10. Clause 5 Objective

Replace clause 5 with:

“2.1 Objective

- (1) The national significance of the electricity network is recognised, protected and provided for, so that the network:
- (a) is upgraded, improved and resilient to provide for the social, economic and cultural well-being of present and future generations and their health and safety;
 - (b) is developed and operated in a timely, efficient, and ongoing manner while managing adverse effects from or on the EN; and
 - (c) supports achievement of New Zealand’s climate change mitigation and renewable energy targets.”

11. Policies

Replace policy 1 with:

“National significance and benefits of the EN

Policy 1:

- (1) Decision-makers on EN activities must:
- (a) recognise and provide for the national significance of the EN; and
 - (b) provide for the ongoing benefits of the EN to be realised at national, regional and local scales, relative to any localised adverse effects.

Policy 2:

- (1) Decision-makers must recognise that the benefits of the EN include:
- (a) providing for the social, economic and cultural well-being of people and communities to meet the needs of present and future generations and their health and safety;
 - (b) providing services that are essential to support human life and the development, growth, and functioning of districts, regions, New Zealand, and the economy;
 - (c) providing safe, secure, reliable, and resilient electricity supply that is responsive to demand from homes, communities, and businesses at a local, regional, and national scale;
 - (d) efficient storage and transfer of electricity;
 - (e) supporting climate change mitigation and the electrification of the economy, including by:
 - i. supporting new, expanded or increased renewable electricity generation;
 - ii. increasing and improving network capacity; and

- iii. providing direct connections for industry and commercial development;
and
- (f) enhancing supply of electricity through the ETN by removing points of congestion.”

Insert new policy:

“Māori Interests

Policy 3:

- (1) Decision-makers must recognise and provide for Māori interests in relation to EN activities, including by:
 - (a) taking into account the outcomes of any engagement with tangata whenua on any relevant resource consent, notice of requirement, or private plan change;
 - (b) recognising the opportunities tangata whenua may have in developing and operating their own EDN assets at any scale or in partnership;
 - (c) avoiding, where practicable, or otherwise mitigating, the adverse effects of EN activities on sites of significance to Māori; and
 - (d) local authorities:
 - i. providing opportunities for tangata whenua involvement where EN activities may affect a site of significance or issue of cultural significance to Māori; and
 - ii. operating in a way that is consistent with any relevant iwi participation legislation or Mana Whakahono ā Rohe.”

Insert new policy:

“Site, route and method selection for EN activities

Policy 4:

- (1) Decision-makers must recognise that it is the role of Transpower or the EDN provider to:
 - (a) determine the purpose, scope, required capacity, and technical solution for proposed EN activities; and
 - (b) consider sites, routes, and methods where appropriate and identify the preferred site, route, and method for EN activities, ancillary EN activities and EN assets.”

Replace policies 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 with:

“Providing for EN activities and managing the effects of proposed EN activities on the environment

Policy 5:

- (1) Decision-makers must provide for routine EN activities to occur in all locations and environments, provided adverse effects on the environment are, where practicable, avoided, remedied or mitigated, while acknowledging the existing nature of the assets.

Policy 6:

- (1) In rural environments, decision-makers should ensure that non-routine EN activities seek to avoid adverse effects on outstanding natural features and landscapes, areas of high natural character, and areas of high recreation value and amenity.

Policy 7:

- (1) Decision-makers must recognise and provide for the operational need or functional need of the EN to operate in, be located in, or traverse environments, including:
 - (a) the need for EN assets to convey electricity over long distances and in all locations and environments, including:
 - i. within and across urban and rural environments;
 - ii. within the coastal environment, including the coastal marine area; and
 - iii. across jurisdictional boundaries within and across districts and regions; and
 - (b) the need for the EN to operate effectively and efficiently as an interconnected system across New Zealand;
 - (c) recognition that the ETN and EDN are separate networks that have differing functional need and operational need;
 - (d) the requirement for regular maintenance and upgrading of the EN due to its age, the need to improve EN resilience, and the need to increase and improve capacity to meet changing demand and supply;
 - (e) the need for the EN to connect to electricity generation, and to respond to demand, wherever located; and
 - (f) the functional need for the EN to locate in areas at risk from natural hazards, where Transpower or the EDN provider have considered and managed potential natural hazard risks.

Policy 8:

- (1) When considering the environmental effects of EN activities and ancillary EN activities, including measures to avoid, remedy, or mitigate any adverse effects on the environment, decision-makers must:

- (a) have regard to the extent to which any adverse effects have been avoided, remedied or mitigated through the selection of route, site, or method of undertaking the work;
- (b) recognise that there may be unavoidable adverse effects regardless of the route, site, and method chosen, with adverse effects reduced as far as practicable;
- (c) provide for EN activities that have an operational need or functional need to be in particular locations and environments, including in areas where section 6 matters apply, even where there may be unavoidable adverse effects on those environments;
- (d) consider the constraints imposed on achieving those measures by any operational need of the EN;
- (e) recognise that development, upgrading and improvement of the EN will be necessary in order to maintain and improve the capacity and delivery of the EN over time;
- (f) recognise that EN activities may result in changes in amenity that are unavoidable and necessary to achieve an effective, efficient, safe, secure, reliable, and resilient EN, and that such changes may not constitute adverse effects under the Act;
- (g) adopt relevant international standards (that have been adopted for use in New Zealand), national standards, and recognised best practice standards and methodologies to assess and manage adverse effects; and
- (h) consider the financial and timing implications of mitigation measures and any consent conditions to ensure these are proportionate to the adverse effects of the EN or particular EN activities.

Policy 9:

(1) In urban environments:

- (a) decision-makers must recognise that the EN forms an essential part of well-functioning urban environments that must be provided for;
- (b) decision-makers must recognise that the effective and efficient development, operation, maintenance, and upgrading of the EN may be appropriate use and development when protecting historic heritage;
- (c) decision-makers must ensure, wherever practicable, that new EDN lines are placed underground, particularly within new subdivisions, while recognising the financial and technical constraints of undergrounding;
- (d) decision-makers must ensure that, where development will result in an increase in demand for electricity, sufficient on-site space is provided for EDN assets to meet demand; and

- (e) local authorities must consult with EDN providers to determine an appropriate method or means for identifying when EDN assets are required to meet increasing demand.

Policy 10:

- (1) Transpower or the EDN provider must consider practicable opportunities and measures to reduce the existing adverse effects of EN assets when considering non-routine EN activities, taking into account the functional need, operational need, and the financial implications of any measures to reduce adverse effects.”

Replace policies 10 and 11 with:

“Managing the effects of third parties on the EN

Policy 11:

- (1) Decision-makers and local authorities must manage adverse effects of activities undertaken by third parties on the EN, including by:
 - (a) avoiding direct effects on the EN;
 - (b) avoiding reverse sensitivity effects on the EN, to the extent reasonably possible; and
 - (c) ensuring that the effective operation, maintenance, upgrading, and development of the EN is not compromised.

Policy 12:

- (1) In order to manage adverse effects of activities undertaken by third parties on the EN:
 - (a) local authorities must identify and map the ETN and other EN assets of national or regional significance within their district, whether or not these are designated;
 - (b) decision-makers, as relevant, must engage with the operator of the ETN to implement the buffer corridors, provided in any national environmental standards for electricity networks or similar standards, within which it can be expected that sensitive activities, buildings, earthworks, subdivision and other activities that have the potential to compromise the ETN, are to be generally avoided;
 - (c) decision-makers, as relevant, must engage with EDN providers to implement the provisions of any national environmental standards for electricity networks or similar standards, that protect the EDN from adverse effects of third parties;
 - (d) decision-makers must ensure that buildings, structures, earthworks, subdivision, and land use activities are designed and located to maintain safe distances from, and allow sufficient space for access to, and maintenance, construction, development, and upgrading of, EN assets; and

- (e) decision-makers must ensure the nature and location of any proposed trees or vegetation to be planted around the EN does not compromise its function and operation.”

Replace policies 12, 13, and 14 with:

“Long-term spatial and strategic planning for the EN

Policy 13:

- (1) When undertaking long-term spatial and strategic planning:
 - (a) local authorities must engage with EN operators to facilitate the medium to long-term strategic planning for the construction, operation, maintenance, and upgrading of the EN;
 - (b) local authorities should utilise regional and district spatial plans and future development strategies as tools to identify existing and future EN asset needs and to make provision for sufficient space for EN assets to be developed as far as practicable;
 - (c) local authorities and decision-makers, as relevant, must recognise that the designation process can facilitate long-term planning for construction, operation, maintenance, upgrading and development of the EN; and
 - (d) local authorities must recognise that not all EN activities and EN assets can be spatially identified in advance.”

Insert new policy:

“Electric and magnetic fields

Policy 14:

- (1) Local authorities must manage electric or magnetic fields associated with the EN based on recommendations from the World Health Organization monograph Environmental Health Criteria (No 238, Extremely low frequency fields) and International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection ‘Guidelines for limiting exposure to time-varying electric and magnetic fields (1 Hz to 100 kHz)’ (Health Physics 99(6): 818–836; 2010) (ICNIRP Guidelines) or their revisions, or any other applicable New Zealand standards.”

12. Timing

Insert new clause 3.1:

“(1) Decision-makers must give effect to this national policy statement on and from the commencement date.”

Made at Wellington on 15 December 2025.

Hon Chris Bishop
For the Minister for the Environment

This is secondary legislation issued under the authority of the Legislation Act 2019 .	
Title	National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Amendment 2025
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