



To all Registered Electrical Contractors

This bulletin is to advise you of recent industry developments that effect our common day to day operations.

Please read the information carefully, as it will assist both you and Powercor to provide industry best service standards to our mutual customers.

If you require any further information on any connection matter you are encouraged to call the relevant connection contact personnel detailed at the rear of this document.

Ken Greenway
CONNECTIONS STANDARDS MANAGER

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR SERVICE FUSE REMOVAL & REINSERTION

It is anticipated an industry Code of Practice to allow "E" Grade licensed electricians and "L" & "G" grade licensed electrical inspectors to remove and reinsert service fuses will be sent to those persons in the near future.

The *Code* will permit these personnel to operate service fuses on installations with a demand of up to 100 amps supplied from a dedicated service.

Eligible personnel will be required to be competent in the function and use the correct tools and equipment. The licensed person must notify Powercor (or the relevant distributor) of the proposed disconnection details including the name and licence number of the person performing the disconnection, customer, address, anticipated reconnection time etc. Notification of the time of re-connection, and re-sealing of the fuse with a uniquely numbered seal where a seal has been removed is also a condition of operating the fuse.

Powercor must be contacted to arrange fuse removal and reinsertion for installations not covered by the *Code*.

UNAUTHORISED REMOVAL & INSERTION OF SERVICE FUSES OR WIRE

There have been many recent instances, particularly in new housing estates, of unauthorised removal and insertion of service fuses and insertion of wire in meter panel fuses.

Powercor advises its affected customers to fit a Power Industry Lock (VPI) to their meter box to prevent a re-occurrence of this expensive, inconvenient, and potentially hazardous practice.

We request that you also assist to stamp out this dangerous practice by advising your customers to take the necessary precautions where they have experienced this problem.

As an alternative to locking the box with a VPI lock, B&R have recently released a device fitted with a VPI lock, which attaches to the meter panel and prevents removal of the fuse wedge. This device permits access to the equipment in the box without the necessity of a key to open the box.

Both locking methods are acceptable.

SERVICE CABLE CLEARANCES

The Electricity Safety (Network Assets) Regulations 1999 introduced on 1 January 2000 require increased clearances for overhead service cables in some situations.

This table is an extract from the regulations -

Service line and other cable system location	Min. Distance
Over a 2000m wide strip in the centre of each carriageway of a road	5500mm
Over any other part of a freeway, primary road, or highway as defined in Part A of Schedule 3	5500mm
Over any other part of a secondary road, or collector road as defined in Part B of Schedule 3	4900mm
Over any other part of any other road	4600mm
Over any part of a driveway	4600mm
Over other ground traversable by vehicles	4600mm
At the connection to a building or structure	3000mm
Elsewhere	3000mm

Please note the increased height from 3.9m to 4.6m over driveways (including domestic driveways) and ground traversable by vehicles.

The OCEI has advised that domestic lawns and gardens are not considered to be traversable by vehicles.

The minimum height of 3m at the point of attachment to the premises is unchanged.

The new increased heights apply to all new connections, and all alterations to existing premises that require a replacement service to be installed.

As before, if a new or replacement overhead service cable is proposed, electricians must locate the point of attachment to ensure any new service cable can be installed to meet and maintain the required clearances without excessively intruding on adjacent properties.

Where this cannot be achieved, it will be usually be necessary to arrange an underground supply to the premises or in some cases, it may be appropriate to erect a private pole inside and adjacent to the property boundary.

To assist in achieving the required clearances, a mid-span service may be provided in some cases.

However this type of service will not be provided to a new installation:

- **where a mid-span service already exists between any two poles.**
- **where a mid-span service may be required to be installed to an existing customer.**
- **where a customer would normally be serviced from a pole, but does not provide a suitable point of attachment to do so.**
- **where it is not technically feasible to do so.**

This policy is partly due to current industry standards which only permit one mid span service between any two poles. If one exists, any other overhead service must originate from a pole, or an underground supply must be provided.

Where a mid span service is proposed to be installed to facilitate clearances, Powercor must be contacted to confirm this will be permissible before work commences.

This position is subject to review of current mid span servicing standards and OCEI guidelines to the regulations.

The Service & Installation Rules will be revised when these guidelines are available, and you will be advised if this changes the above arrangements.

REPAIRS TO PRIVATE OVERHEAD ELECTRIC LINES (POEL)

To assist electricians and customers in the event of a defective POEL, Powercor may assist in repairs to the line.

If they are on site, Powercor line workers may, under the supervision of the licensed electrician on site, assist in the repair of the line. This is provided the REC or customer has requested this service, agreed to pay the costs involved, and undue delays are avoided.

Note that the Electricity Safety (Installations) Regulations 1999 require all POELs requiring substantial reconstruction to be placed underground. Substantial reconstruction is defined as the replacement of 30% of the conductors or poles in a line.

If substantial reconstruction is required, but it is proposed the line be temporarily repaired, the customer or REC undertaking the work is required to apply for exemption from the OCEI. The OCEI may be contacted on 03 92039700 for this purpose.

The REC must also provide an Electrical Work Request to the Powercor personnel prior to energising the line if Powercor is required to reconnect supply.

NO GO ZONE

Overhead Power Lines

The No Go Zone is an initiative of the Building and Construction Industry developed to address the high number of fatalities involving contact with overhead power lines. This is a joint initiative of Workcover, the Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector and relevant unions in consultation with key industry associations. Powercor fully supports this campaign.

The No Go Zone requirements apply to all building or construction sites, and in particular relates to the use of plant such as cranes, excavation equipment, concrete placing booms, and elevating work platforms.

Mandatory requirements (as stated in the brochure/s) are:

- Utilisation of a certified spotter for plant or persons operating within 6.4 meters of a distribution power line;
- For works in the No Go Zone - completion and documentation of a risk assessment and job safety analysis and obtaining written permission from the relevant Power Company.

If you have any queries regarding requirements to work within the No Go Zone, contact Powercor on telephone 132334.

Underground Lines

Similar restrictions to overhead lines must be observed when working in the vicinity of underground cables.

When you are undertaking excavation works on public land, as well as looking out for No Go Zone requirements for overhead assets, it is a requirement of the Electricity Safety (Network Assets) Regulations 1999 that you also obtain information regarding the existence of any underground assets. To obtain this information, you should contact the Dial before you Dig one call service on telephone 1100. Powercor as a referral authority will provide plans and advice on the need for any further precautionary actions upon receiving these enquiries - usually within a 48 hours.

FULL RETAIL CONTESTABILITY – REC IMPACT

The Office of the Regulator General has advised that “Full Retail Contestability” will commence in Victoria from 1 January 2002. This will enable all Victoria electricity customers to choose their electricity retailer from that date

Introduction of “Full Retail Contestability” is being staged, and is dependent upon electricity consumption. Customers with consumption in excess of 40 giga watt hours per year have been able to choose the retailer from whom they purchase electricity since 1994 and all customers with an electricity consumption in excess of 160 megawatt hours a year (MWh/yr) are currently contestable.

From 1 January 2001 electricity customers consuming more than 40 MWh/yr will become contestable and able to choose their electricity retailer. Typically these customers will have an annual electricity bill in excess of \$5000 for each metered occupancy. (The final stage of retail contestability where all electricity customers will become contestable is to be introduced on 1 January 2002.)

This means that from 1 January next year an additional 35,000 small manufacturers, convenience stores, restaurants and larger fast food outlets, smaller supermarkets, some professional services firms, wineries, farms, horticulturalists and similar customers may choose an electricity retailer from whom they purchase their electricity.

The electricity retailer is responsible for the metering installation of those customers (above 40mwhr/yr) that they retail electricity to.

Therefore for customers who choose an electricity retailer other than Powercor, the occupancy cannot be connected until the meters are installed by the retailers meter provider. The servicing and connection work will then be performed by Powercor.

Where Powercor is the chosen retailer, the metering, servicing and connection will normally take place at the same time by Powercor personnel.

To ensure that connections are not delayed, RECs should remind customers who anticipate that their account will be in excess of \$5000 per year (all CT customers will be contestable) that they will need to select their retailer. Their retailer will need to arrange the meter installation prior to Powercor connecting the premise to supply.

Where known, the REC should include the name of the customers retailer on the Electrical Work Request (EWR) to assist in facilitating the connection.

Please call the general inquiries number if more information is required on this topic.

UNAUTHORISED INTERFERENCE WITH POWERCOR ASSETS

There have been recent reports of RECs interfering with Powercor assets such as service cables, fuses and meters.

Only persons formally authorised by Powercor are permitted to work on these assets. Where unauthorised interference has occurred, or is suspected to have occurred, it is Powercor policy to advise the OCEI, the customer and the offender in writing of the offence.

Liability for any costs, loss, damage, or injury which result from the offence will be charged to the offender. RECs are advised they must not interfere with these assets.

CONNECTION CONTACTS

General Inquiries -	Residential	132 114
	Business	132 334
Service Difficulties & Faults		132 412
New Connections	Phone	1300 360 410
	Facsimile	1800 062242

CONNECTION ADVICE

The electrical inspection company Electrical Certification Australia (ECA) is contracted to Powercor to provide advice on connection matters such as the Service & Installation Rules on Powercor's behalf. Please contact the ECA personnel listed if you have any queries on these matters.

Note: Site Visits - A site visit is not normally provided as part of this service. Arrangements may be made by calling new connections on the number above where you consider an on site visit to be essential. However any site visit is subject to the new connection officers' agreement.

Head Office	Roy Sands	03 9747 3488	Geelong	Steve Harriott	0419 346 399
	Nicci Wall	03 9747 3488		Neville Hewitt	0419 346 397
Altona	Greg Carroll	0419 871 835		John Moloney	0419 346 398
Ararat	Bruce Paton	0418 568 497	Mildura	Bob Spooner	0418 565 100
Ballarat	Wally Harris	018 501 867		Tony Williams	0418 565 373
Ball't North	Bill Kaiser	0418 563 223	Shepparton	Rod Brown	0419 112 814
Ball't South	Peter McCutcheon	0409 359 093		Gordon Horgon	0419 873 157
Bendigo	Les Hartland	0408 509 424	Sunshine	Zbigniew Piorkowski	0419 873 804
	Lindsay Walkington	0409 709 423	Swan Hill	Lindsay Rogers	0418 567 385
Colac	Peter Bouchier	0419 543 044	Warrnambool	Wayne Rooke	0419 376 272
Echuca	Ken Davies	0408 832 370	Werribee	Colin Trethowan	0419 871 935



Season's Greetings



*from all at
Powercor*