

National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission

The National Environmental Standards (NES) for Electricity Transmission came into effect on 14 January 2010. The NES sets out a national framework of permissions and consent requirements for activities on existing electricity transmission lines. Activities include the operation, maintenance and upgrading of existing lines.

The NES:

- specifies what electricity transmission activities are permitted, subject to terms and conditions to ensure that these activities do not have significant adverse effects on the environment
- specifies the resource consent requirements for electricity transmission activities that do not meet the terms and conditions for permitted activities.

The NES only applies to existing high voltage electricity transmission lines and does not apply to the construction of new transmission lines, nor to substations. The NES does not apply to electricity distribution lines - these are the lines carrying electricity from regional substations to electricity users.

Guidance on the NES

The Ministry for the Environment has developed detailed guidance on the NES for councils, industry and the public, which is now available on the Ministry's website, at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/laws/standards/electricity-transmission.html>.

The Ministry will also hold a series of workshops in March 2010 on the NES and the National Policy Statement (NPS) on Electricity Transmission.

Further guidance is also being developed by the Ministry to assist Councils with how to review and amend their planning documents to take into account the requirements of the NES. This guidance is due for release mid 2010.