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To the Chief Executive Officers
Health and Safety Managers
Wine Companies
Grape Growers
Vineyard Owners

Dear Sir/Madam

Safety around Electric Lines

During the 2017 vintage an incident occurred where an item of mobile plant came in contact with a live overhead 11,000 volt power line. The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 considerably widens the range of parties (PCBUs – persons conducting a business or undertaking) who might be held responsible in the event of a serious accident.

With the 2018 vintage approaching Marlborough Lines wishes to ensure that all parties in the wine industry are aware of their responsibilities around power lines and the specific regulations and requirements which apply when working close to power lines. At vintage the wine industry workforce grows substantially and many staff hired temporarily or brought into the region may not be aware of the exact safety requirements.

The NEW ZEALAND ELECTRICAL CODE OF PRACTICE for ELECTRICAL SAFE DISTANCES (NZECP 34:2001) sets out in section 5, the safe distances for the operation of **mobile plant** near electricity conductors.

Mobile Plant is defined as “cranes, elevating work platforms, tip trucks or similar plant, irrigation-booms, any equipment fitted with a jib or boom and any device capable of being raised or lowered.”

This means that in almost every harvesting situation there is likely to be mobile plant operating which is capable of encroaching into the required safe working distance from live lines.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Section 5 of NZECP:2001 includes the following section:

5.2.1 The distance between any live overhead electric line and any part of any mobile plant or load carried shall be “**AT LEAST 4.0 METRES**” unless the operator has received written consent from the overhead electric line owner allowing a reduced distance.

In the Marlborough region, Marlborough Lines can issue a “Close Approach Authority” which will specify;

- the voltage of the overhead electric line and the minimum approach distance to be observed,
- any other special conditions to be observed,

- the section of line to which the consent applies.

In some cases where Marlborough Lines is satisfied as to the competence of the company involved or the safety systems operating, a blanket consent may be given to cover multiple sites and electric lines for a specific period, such as over vintage.

In all cases the **prior approval** of Marlborough Lines is required and this will involve a site visit by Marlborough Lines Staff who will then issue the authority. To initiate the process you should call Marlborough Lines (03) 5777007 and staff will take details and arrange for a site visit. This can also be arranged via email to info@linesmarl.co.nz

It is a further requirement of ECP 34 that any mobile plant "likely to be used at any time in the proximity of overhead electric lines" is required to have a warning notice as near as practicable to the operators/drivers position stating "**WARNING KEEP CLEAR OF POWER LINES**".

Included with this letter please find a poster suitable for display in your messroom/tearoom/workshop, and a quantity of warning stickers to put in the cabs of your harvesters, trucks, tractors and other mobile plant.

We wish you a safe, incident free and successful vintage 2018.

Yours sincerely



Warner Nichol

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