

DISTANCE FROM POWER LINES

AS2550.1-2011

Mobile Elevating Work Platforms (MEWPs), also commonly referred to as EWPs, must not be closer than the following distances to power lines:

- Distribution lines up to and including 133kv (usually poles)
6.4m or 3.0m with a qualified 'spotter'
- Transmission lines greater than 133kv (towers)
10m or 8m with a qualified 'spotter'

NOTES:

- MEWPs must not work directly over power lines unless prior approval has been obtained from the supply authorities.
- A 'spotter' is a competent person. Check with each state authority for their spotter requirements.
- To work closer than the specified distances requires approval from the relevant electrical authorities and may include additional qualifications and specification of insulated EWPs.
- Do NOT let the MEWP and operator enter the 'no go zones' (ie 6.4m and 10m) without obtaining the appropriate approval.

STATE REGULATIONS

Each State has its own regulations that take precedence over the Australian Standards. Below is a State by State summary of their current positions.

NSW: SafeWork NSW - <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/> – Code of Practice 2006: Work Near Overhead Power lines

MEWP operation may not be any closer than the following distances to power lines:

Up to 132 kV	3.0 m
132 kV to 330 kV	6.0 m
More than 330 kV	8.0 m

To work closer than these distances requires authority from the relevant electrical authority and adherence to cl.64(2)(e) of the regulations.

QLD: Electrical Safety Office - <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/about-us/about-the-electrical-safety-office>

The Electrical Safety Regulation 2002 covers this area and breaks down the distances in detail. Exclusion zones are broken down not only by size of power line but also by the competency level of the operator. This means that the requirements should be clarified with the electrical authority before work commences even if the distance appears to be outside the zones.

The Code of Practice gives the following minimum distances as guidance:

Up to 132 kV	3.0 m
132 kV to 330 kV	6.0 m
More than 330 kV	8.0 m

WA: Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety – <https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/building-and-energy/legislation-framework-energy>

This falls under Regulation 316A from the Electricity Regulations 1947 and states the following as the minimum distances:

Less than 33 kV	3.0 m
Over 33 kV	6.0 m
Over 133 kV	8.0 m

NT: NT WorkSafe - <https://worksafe.nt.gov.au/>

This falls under the Electricity Reform (Safety and Technical) Regulations. Table 2, Schedule 3 gives the following minimum distances:

Up to 33 kV	1.5 m
Above 33 kV to 132 kV	3.0 m
Above 132 kV to 275 kV	4.0 m
Above 275 kV to 330 kV	6.0 m
Above 330 kV to 500 kV	8.0 m

In addition, the operator must check with the network operator to ensure other distances are applicable.

ACT: <https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/home/workhealthandsafety>

At this stage, use AS2550.1.2011 as no clear answer has been received

VIC: Energy Safe Victoria - <https://esv.vic.gov.au/>

As per Table 612 of Electricity Safety (General Regulations) 2019 effective as of 6th Dec 2019

Up to 1 kV	1.0 m
Above 1 kV to 66 kV	2.0 m
Above 66 kV to 132 kV	4.0 m
Above 132 kV to 500 kV	6.4 m

Note: Spotter is defined as a competent person who shall have successfully completed an endorsed training course.

TAS: TasNetworks - <https://www.tasnetworks.com.au/safety/working-near-powerlines/working-near-overhead-powerlines>

As per AS2550.19-2007

SA: Workplace Services - www.sa.gov.au

As per SA Electricity Regulations 2012 Schedule 5, Table 2

Up to 33 kV	1.5 m
Above 33 kV to 132 kV	3.0 m
Above 132 kV to 275 kV	4.0 m
Above 275 kV to 330 kV	6.0 m
Above 330 kV to 500 kV	8.0 m

The EWPA advises that when you are working from an MEWP, if you or any part of the MEWP will be nearer than the minimum distance of 6.4m from distribution lines and 10m from transmission lines, permission must be obtained from the appropriate energy authority.

Clearance Requirements for Operating Non-Insulated Mobile Plant Including Elevating Work Platforms Near Power Lines While in Operating Mode

Overhead Power Lines on Poles

For the platform or the person located in the platform

NO GO ZONE
Anywhere Above Power Lines and Within the Each Side and In Front the Bottom of Power Lines

Spotter Required Between 3-6.4m of Power Lines

Spotter Required Between 3-6.4m of Power Lines

Open Area Outside 1.5m of Power Lines

Open Area Outside 1.5m of Power Lines

3m

Special Provisions

For Operating Elevating Work Platforms Seeking to Operate in the No GO Zone

No.1 Notify the power authority before commencing work.

No.2 Obtain written permission from the power authority.

No.3 DO NOT commence work until a pre-start site/job meeting and a risk assessment have been completed.

The term "Spotter" is defined as a safety observer who is a person competent for the sole task of observing and warning against unsafe approach to overhead power lines and other electrical apparatus.

Note:
These special provisions are not applicable to workers in or engaged by companies in the electrical supply industry.

Overhead Power Lines on Towers

For the platform or the person located in the platform

NO GO ZONE
Anywhere Above Power Lines and Within the Each Side and In Front the Bottom of Power Lines

Spotter Required Between 3-6.4m of Power Lines

Spotter Required Between 3-6.4m of Power Lines

Open Area Outside 1.5m of Power Lines

Open Area Outside 1.5m of Power Lines

3m

Note: If the boom is insulated and has a current test certificate issued by a NATA approved laboratory, no spotter is required in the yellow area. The 3.0m clearance is from the top of the bucket of the elevating work platform.

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