COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



As we continue to power homes, businesses, and essential services across the Buller network, we're proud to share the stories, updates, and initiatives that keep our community connected. This newsletter is our way of keeping you informed about updates on network projects, planned outages in your area, and offering helpful tips for staying safe around electricity and our assets.

We're committed not only to delivering reliable electricity and high-quality electrical services, but also to strengthening the communities we serve.

BULLER ELECTRICITY

Planned Areas of Work:

We have planned maintenance & capital work in the following areas during the period between October and December 2026:

- Domett Street, Westport
- Rintoul & Romilly Street, Westport
- Tauranga Bay

Please note that the above information may be subject to change. Updates are provided on Buller Electricity's Facebook page.



MEDICALLY DEPENDENT CONSUMERS

If you rely on medical equipment that needs a continuous electricity supply, it's important to plan ahead for possible power interruptions.

We recommend having an emergency plan in place, which may include:

- A backup generator with certified change-over switch. For a quote, please contact Electro Services on 03 788 9900.
- An uninterruptible power supply (UPS) with a standby battery.
- A plan to temporarily relocate to another location with power if needed.

It's also important to register as a medically dependent customer with your electricity retailer so they're aware of your needs.



PLANNING FOR SHUTDOWNS

Planned power outages are sometimes necessary to keep our electricity network safe, reliable, and well-maintained. A little preparation can make these periods more comfortable, safe, and stress-free. Here are some helpful tips for getting ready:

- Make sure your contact details are up to date with your electricity retailer so you receive outage notifications. Ensure mobile numbers are registered for best notification.
- Follow Buller Electricity Ltd on Facebook for live updates.
- Charge phones, power banks, and essential devices ahead of time.
- Check torch batteries and keep a flashlight somewhere easy to reach.
- If you rely on an electric garage door, learn how to open it manually.
- Boil water and fill a thermos before the outage for hot drinks.
- Avoid opening the fridge or freezer-food stays cold for longer when doors remain shut.
- Unplug sensitive electronics to protect them from potential surges when power returns.
- If you or someone in your household relies on medical equipment that needs power, make a backup plan in advance. Contact your retailer and healthcare provider for guidance if needed.
- Keep warm clothing or blankets handy in cooler seasons, as heat pumps and heaters won't operate.
- If you have gas hobs or a BBQ, ensure you have gas on hand and know how to use them safely.
- Use battery-powered lanterns instead of candles to reduce fire risk.
- During maintenance work, please keep clear of crews and equipment.
- Power may be restored without notice- always turn off cooktops and heaters during an outage, and never leave flammable items on or near them. This simple step can prevent a house fire.

Treat all lines as live at all times, even if you know that shutdowns are planned.

GENERATOR SAFETY



Portable generators can be extremely useful during a power outage, helping keep essential appliances running until the electricity supply is restored. Using a generator incorrectly can create a serious electrical hazard, not only for you and your family, but also for those who carry out work on the lines, such as our crews. A portable generator should never be connected to your home's wiring or switchboard unless the property has an approved generator connection and changeover system installed by a registered electrical worker. Never attempt to power your house by connecting a generator through a household power point or by using a homemade or modified lead.

If a generator is connected incorrectly, electricity can feed backwards from your property, into the electricity network. This is known as backfeeding. This can damage your home's wiring and create dangerous voltages where electricity is not expected to be present. During a power outage, our crews may be working on lines and equipment to restore power to the community. If a generator feeds electricity back onto the network, it can unexpectedly make electrical equipment live, causing a severe electric shock or electrocution to anyone working on the network. Incorrect generator use can ultimately result in severe harm to you, your home, your neighbours, and to our crews.

JACOB'S GENERATOR SAFETY GUIDE

BEL electrician and line mechanic, Jacob shares his top tips for generator safety here:



Turn generators off whilst fueling:
Always turn your generator off and allow it to cool before adding fuel. Fuel being spilled can ignite and cause a serious fire.

Keep it outside: Never operate a generator inside your home, garage or another enclosed or poorly ventilated area. Generator exhausts contain carbon monoxide, which can be deadly.

Keep it dry: Protect generators, plugs and leads from rain and water, and use appropriate electrical protection when equipment is being used outdoors or in damp conditions.

Don't overload it: Check the generator's rating and make sure the equipment connected to it does not exceed its capacity.

Use the right changeover switch: If a generator is being used to supply your home's wiring, it must be connected through an approved mains/generator changeover switch installed by a registered electrical worker. This isolates your home from the electricity network and prevents dangerous backfeeding.

Keep children away: Generators contain hot surfaces, moving components, fuel and electrical connections. Keep children well clear while a generator is operating.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions: Different generators have different operating and safety requirements.

We're here to help:
To discuss the installation of a generator changover switch or manual changeover arrangement, please contact ESL on 03788 9900.



Downed Lines

Sometimes easy to see, sometimes not.

If you see a fallen or damaged line, always treat it as live. A powerline does not need to be sparking, moving, smoking or making a noise to be dangerous.

Sometimes they're obvious and you might see a powerline lying across a road, driveway or paddock, a damaged or fallen power pole, or wires hanging unusually low. In these situations, the danger may be easy to recognise but you still need to keep your distance.

A downed line may be much harder to see. It could be:

- Hidden in long grass or vegetation.
- Partially covered by branches, leaves or storm debris.
- Lying in mud, a puddle or floodwater.
- Caught in a tree, hedge or fence.
- Lying along the side of a road or driveway.
- Difficult to distinguish from another cable or piece of wire.

Never assume a wire is safe simply because it looks harmless.

Stay at least 10 metres away, warn others and contact emergency services on 111 or Buller Electricity on 03 788 8171 immediately.

TREES, POWERLINES, AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

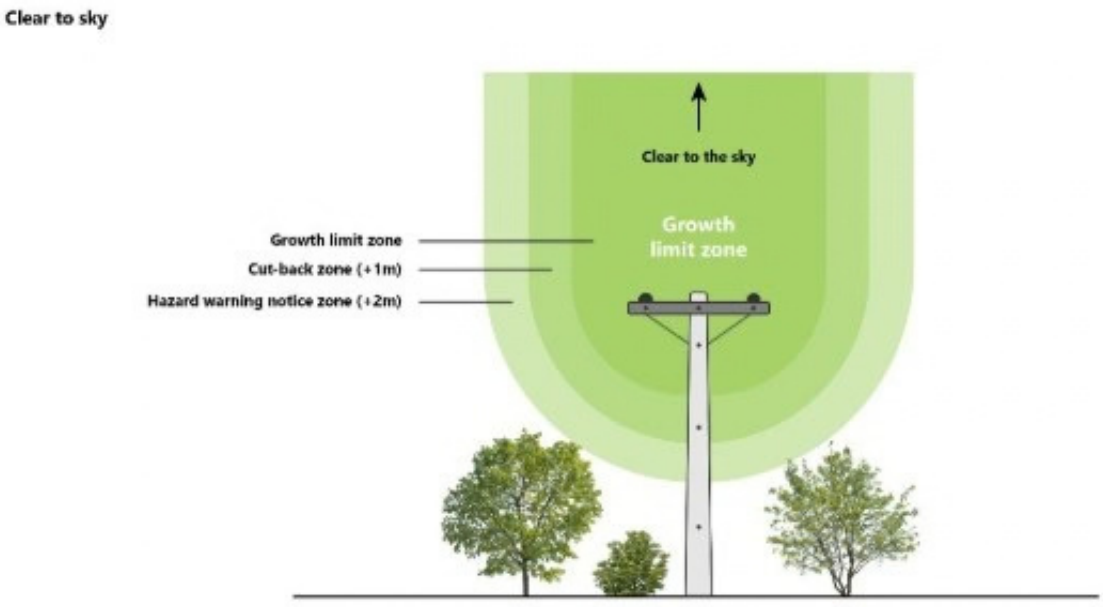
Trees are an important part of the Buller landscape, but trees and branches growing too close to power lines can create serious safety risks, damage electricity infrastructure and cause power outages, particularly during high winds and storms.



New Zealand's Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003 have recently been updated. The changes introduce new requirements around hazardous trees, planting near power lines and vegetation growing above some lines. Buller Electricity has updated its Trees & Power Lines information to help our community understand what the changes mean.

Vegetation growing above the line:

For some power lines, the growth limit zone extends vertically above the line as well as around it. This is known as **clear to the sky**, and means vegetation must also be kept clear above the line.



TREES, POWERLINES, AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Planting a new tree near a power line:

From 23 July 2027, a low-height planting rule will apply. You must not plant a tree if you reasonably expect it could grow taller than its distance from the power line. The low-height planting zone extends 24 metres horizontally from the power line. If you plant a tree in breach of this rule:

- you may be liable for damages
- you may be responsible for the cost if the tree later needs to be cut, trimmed or removed, and
- you cannot use a no-interest tree notice to transfer responsibility for managing the tree to the lines company.

The restriction does not apply to trees that grow naturally. However, if a self-sown tree within the low-height planting zone later needs to be cut, trimmed or removed, the tree owner may be responsible for the cost.

Trees that could fall into a power line:

The treefall hazard zone extends 24 metres from the growth limit zone. Trees within this area may be assessed if there is concern that, because of their condition, size or location, they could fall onto a power line.

This does not mean every tree in the zone is a hazard. A formal treefall hazard notice can only be issued where a tree has been assessed as a moderate or high hazard. **Treefall hazard notices will not be issued before the 23rd of July 2028.** Before then, lines companies may use voluntary processes to discuss hazardous trees with tree owners.

Further information can be found here:
www.bullerelectricity.co.nz/trees-power-lines/

TREES, POWERLINES, AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Cut or trim notices:

A tree owner may commit an offence if, without reasonable excuse, they do not have a tree cut or trimmed as required by a cut or trim notice, or do not tell Buller Electricity the time and location of the work at least three working days before it takes place.

If convicted, the tree owner may be fined up to $10,000. If the offence continues, a further fine of up to $500 for every day or part of a day may apply.

Treefall hazard notices from 23 July 2028:

From 23 July 2028, a tree owner may commit an offence if, without reasonable excuse, they do not have a tree removed within the timeframe required by a treefall hazard notice, or do not tell Buller Electricity the time and location of the removal as required. If convicted, the tree owner may be fined up to $10,000.

Low-height planting zone:

Not complying with the low-height planting zone restrictions is not itself an offence. However, it may affect who is responsible for the cost of future tree trimming or removal and the options available to the tree owner under the regulations.

We're Here to Help:

If you need advice or have questions about trees near powerlines, our team is happy to help. Visit our website, contact us directly on 03 788 8171, or learn more about the regulations and clearing zones online. If you're unable to resolve an issue with us, Utilities Disputes offers a free and independent resolution service.

Further information can be found here:
www.bullerelectricity.co.nz/trees-power-lines/

GLEN'S POWERPOINT SAFETY GUIDE

A little check can prevent a big problem.

Powerpoints are something most of us use every day without giving them much thought. But as the photos from the ESL team show, damaged, worn or overheating powerpoints can become a serious electrical and fire hazard.

Electrician, Glen has put together some simple warning signs to look out for around your home, workplace, shed or rental property.



WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Burn marks or discolouration- Black or brown marks around a powerpoint, plug or switch can be a sign of overheating, arcing or a poor electrical connection. Don't ignore them.

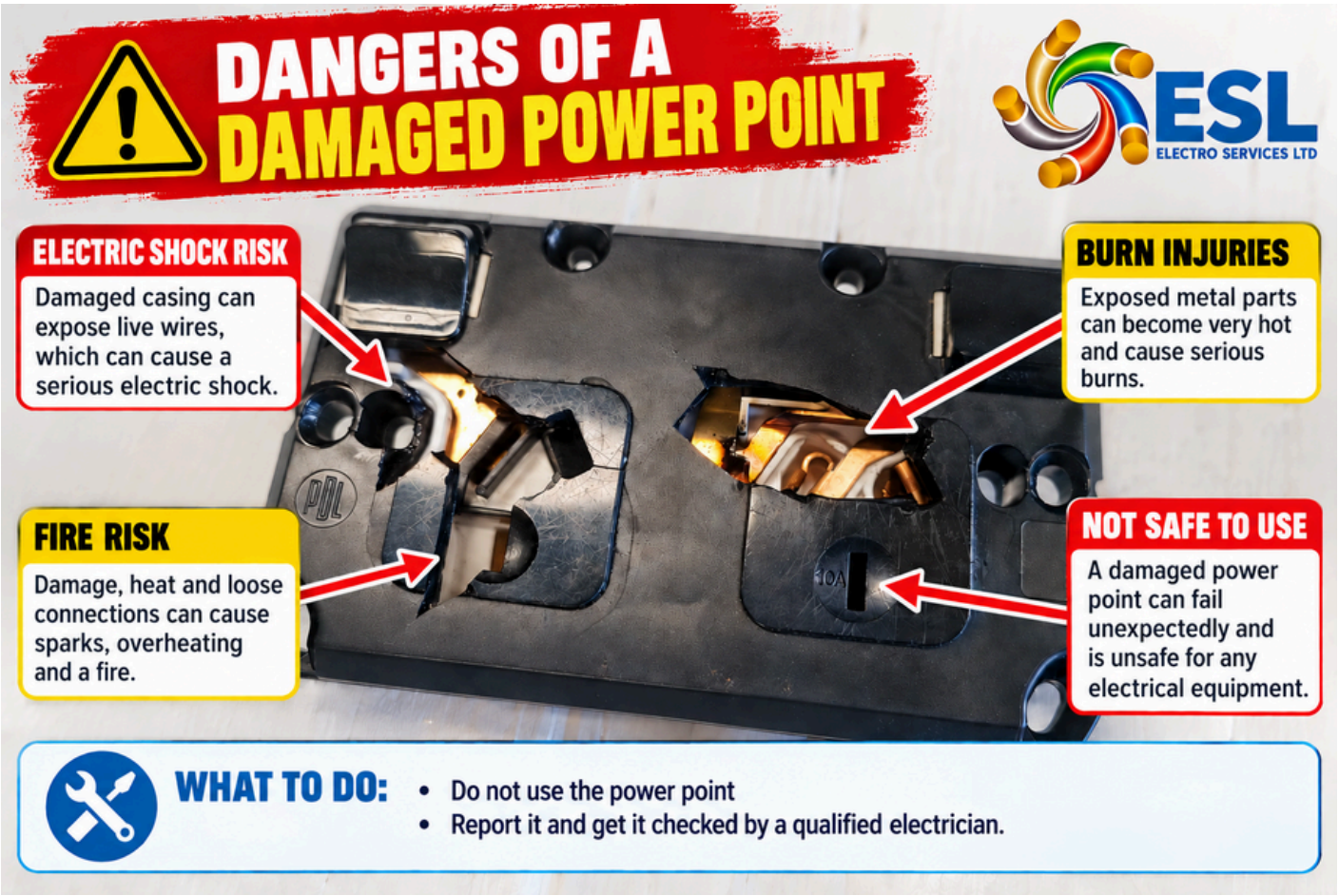
- Cracked, broken or damaged fittings- If a powerpoint is cracked, loose, broken or has exposed internal components, stop using it and have it checked by a registered electrician.

- Powerpoints that feel unusually warm or hot- A powerpoint shouldn't become excessively hot during normal use. Heat can indicate a loose connection, overloading or another electrical fault.

- Buzzing, crackling or unusual smells- Hear a strange noise or notice a hot, burning or melting-plastic smell? Switch the appliance off if it is safe to do so and arrange for the powerpoint to be checked.

- Loose plugs or switches- If a plug no longer fits securely, a switch isn't operating properly, or the whole fitting moves when you use it, it's time to have it looked at.

ESL COMMUNITY SAFETY ADVICE



The damaged powerpoints pictured are a good reminder that electrical problems can develop over time. Early warning signs are worth taking seriously.

If something doesn't look, smell, sound or feel right, stop using it immediately.

🔌 **Glen's simple rule**:

•STOP USING IT • GET IT CHECKED

Spotting a problem early could help prevent electric shock, electrical damage or a fire.

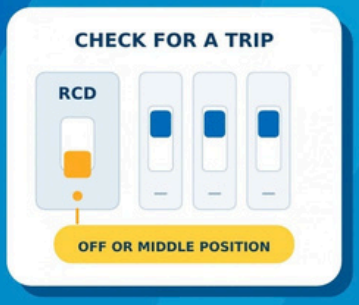
Not sure about a powerpoint? Give the team at ESL a call. It's always better to get an electrical concern checked than to ignore the warning signs.

ESL COMMUNITY SAFETY ADVICE

ESL
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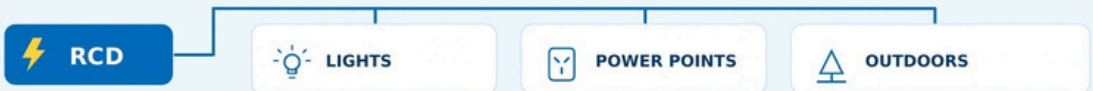
PART POWER AT HOME?

CHECK YOUR SWITCHBOARD FIRST



WHY ONLY PART OF THE HOUSE?

An RCD is a safety switch that can protect several subcircuits. One trip can switch them all off.



4 SIMPLE CHECKS

Only operate the switches on the front of the switchboard.

1 Find the tripped switch

Look for an RCD or circuit breaker in the OFF or middle position. An RCD usually has a TEST button.

2 Reset the RCD

For a shared RCD, switch OFF the breakers it protects. Move the RCD fully OFF, then ON. For a single circuit device, go to step 4.

3 Bring circuits back one at a time

Turn the breakers ON one by one. If the RCD trips, leave the last circuit OFF; reset the RCD and restore the others.

4 Check what is plugged in

Unplug appliances on the affected circuit and turn its lights OFF. Turn that breaker back ON, then plug in and switch on items one at a time. Leave an item that causes another trip unplugged.

! WHEN TO CALL AN ELECTRICIAN

Call if it will not reset, trips with appliances unplugged, you cannot identify the protected circuits, or no switch has tripped. For heat, burning smell or sparking, keep clear and call urgently.

Never remove the cover or keep resetting a tripping RCD.

NEED A HAND?

03 788 9900

ELECTRO SERVICES LTD

electroservices.co.nz

WESTPORT | BULLER

CONGRATULATING OUR NEWLY QUALIFIED LINE MECHANICS



We're proud to congratulate Trey Paterson and Grace Poynter on successfully completing their training and becoming qualified Line Mechanics with Buller Electricity.

Becoming a qualified Line Mechanic takes significant commitment, combining years of practical on-the-job experience with technical training and a strong focus on safety. Trey and Grace have worked hard to develop the skills and knowledge needed to build, maintain and safely work on the network that keeps our Buller communities powered.

Their achievement is also a great example of the importance of growing skills locally and investing in the next generation of our workforce. Developing skilled people within our region helps ensure we continue to have the capability and expertise needed to look after Buller's network both now and in the future.

A huge congratulations to Trey and Grace on reaching this important milestone. We're delighted to have you both as qualified members of the Buller Electricity team and look forward to seeing you continue to grow in your careers.

UPCOMING EVENTS



BEL SCHOLARSHIP PRESENTATIONS 2026



48TH PULSE BULLER CIVIC & SPORT AWARDS 2026

ESL ELECTRO SERVICES LTD

Buller ELECTRIC POWER TRUST

Buller ELECTRICITY

WHEN TO GET IN TOUCH AND HOW

We're here to help keep our community powered safely and reliably. Knowing who to contact can save you time and get things sorted faster.

Contact Buller Electricity or your electricity retailer immediately if you need to report:

⚠️ Downed or low-hanging powerlines.
⚠️ Poles damaged by vehicles, weather, or fire.
⚠️ Sparking, arcing, or smoking electrical equipment.
⚠️ Trees or branches touching powerlines.
⚠️ Exposed underground cables or damaged pillar boxes.
⚠️ Anything that looks unsafe around the electricity network.

Stay well clear (at least 10 metres away, where possible) and always assume lines are live.

In an emergency where there is risk to life or risk of fire:

Stay at least 10 metres away from the area, where possible and call 111 to request assistance from the relevant authorities prior to notifying your electricity retailer or Buller Electricity of the issue.

If you experience a power outage:

Contact your electricity retailer who will arrange for our team to attend to the outage.

BULLER ELECTRICITY CONTACT NUMBER:

03 788 8171

To find our full contact details including a range of electricity retailer's contact details, scan the QR code or visit our website- https://bullerelectricity.co.nz/contact/

A NETWORK BUILT TO SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY



Buller Electricity is 100% consumer-owned. Every BEL truck on the road, every pole replaced, every storm repair is funded by the people who live within BEL's network area.

In this financial year, we absorbed the $307,000 transmission line charge increase applied by Transpower to electrical distribution companies such as BEL. This ensures local households and businesses will not have this additional national cost passed on through their line charges. We also absorbed an additional $500,000 in transmission line charge increases throughout the 2025–2026 financial year.

In total, BEL has absorbed more than $800,000 in national transmission costs that would otherwise have been passed directly to local consumers. To date, we have also committed approximately $632,000 in community sponsorships and grants, including $200,000 for floodwall protection, reinforcing our ongoing investment in the Buller district.

The Buller Electric Power Trust (BEPT) was established on 18 May 1993 to acquire and hold all shares in Buller Electricity Limited on behalf of the electricity consumers across the Buller district.

At its heart, the Trust exists to ensure that the benefits of owning Buller Electricity remain with the community it serves. As shareholder, BEPT plays an important role in protecting the long-term interests of local consumers, while supporting the sustainable ownership and operation of the network.

Through its stewardship, the Trust helps ensure that decisions are made with the wellbeing of the Buller community in mind- today and for future generations to come.

By the community, for the community - supporting Buller's network, our people, and our future.

Buller
ELECTRIC POWER TRUST