

# Transmission infrastructure and biosecurity

March 2024

Victoria's energy system is changing. We urgently need to change our power grid to carry energy from new renewable sources and batteries across the state to Victorian homes, businesses, hospitals, schools and other vital services.

To support Victoria's many essential renewable energy projects, new transmission infrastructure is required. Victorian landholders, including many farmers, who host this infrastructure will play a critical role in supporting the state's transition to renewable energy.

Agriculture is essential to our state and to the livelihood and the social fabric of regional communities. Managing biosecurity to protect this industry is fundamental to the prosperity of all Victorians. Exotic pests and diseases can threaten the agriculture sector and animal industries.

## Biosecurity for transmission infrastructure and other energy assets

VicGrid and Agriculture Victoria recognise the importance of electricity transmission companies working closely with landholders and adhering to the biosecurity measures that protect farms from pests, weeds, diseases and contaminants.

A range of laws, rules and guidelines outline roles and responsibilities to protect Victorian farms from biosecurity threats. These provide guidance for transmission companies on implementing biosecurity practices before, during and after the construction of a transmission line and other energy assets.



## Land Access Code of Practice

The Essential Services Commission (ESC) has developed an enforceable Land Access Code of Practice that sets out biosecurity requirements for transmission companies accessing land.

### The code requires transmission companies to:

- put in place biosecurity policies and procedures in accordance with good industry practice to minimise the spread of weeds, pests and pathogens
- provide landholders with details of these biosecurity policies and procedures on request before accessing land
- document any environmental or biosecurity incidents that occur and communicate the incidents and how they have been managed to landholders immediately.

The code is enforceable and the ESC can take regulatory action and issue penalty notices if there are breaches.

### More information

Access the ESC's Land Access Code of Practice at [esc.vic.gov.au/electricity-and-gas/codes-guidelines-and-policies/land-access-code-practice](https://www.esc.vic.gov.au/electricity-and-gas/codes-guidelines-and-policies/land-access-code-practice)

## Roles and responsibilities: What landholders need to know

### During the planning and design phase

#### Transmission company responsibilities

Before any construction can be considered, the transmission company will attempt to negotiate a voluntary Landowner Access Agreement with the host landholder. This is the primary document that defines when and how properties will be accessed and by whom.

#### This agreement should include the following:

- When the transmission company will be operating on the property and easement.
- Agreement on entry and exit points.
- Biosecurity protection measures compliant with current legislation and any applicable biosecurity management plans.
- The equipment used by the transmission company for their operations on the transmission infrastructure.

#### Landholder responsibilities

Landholders should make sure the agreement contains all reasonable requirements for access to their property, including specific access points and biosecurity requirements such as following the farm's biosecurity management plan.

### Before and during the construction of a transmission line

#### Transmission company responsibilities

When accessing landholders' properties, the terms of the Landowner Access Agreement must be adhered to.

#### Landholder responsibilities

Landholders will need to ensure access to agreed entry and exit points. Signage with biosecurity management plans at entry and exit points to the property should be clear and easy to follow.

### After the construction of a transmission line

Biosecurity controls remain in place at all times, and do not end when construction is completed.

#### Transmission company responsibilities

The transmission company must continue to monitor and follow biosecurity controls to protect livestock and crops.

#### Landholder responsibilities

Landholders must report any biosecurity risks or incidents to Agriculture Victoria by calling:

#### Exotic Plant Pest Hotline:

1800 084 881

**Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline:** 1800 675 888

## Come Clean, Stay Clean, Go Clean

Transmission companies must follow Agriculture Victoria's Come Clean, Stay Clean, Go Clean practices to minimise the spread of animal disease, weeds and plant pests.

### **When company representatives visit a farm:**

They should contact the farmer or land manager before the visit, to discuss any necessary mitigations for biosecurity risk.

### **When company representatives leave a farm:**

They should remove mud, dirt and manure from clothes, boots and equipment before disinfecting them. Where a vehicle washdown station is available, they should use it to clean the vehicle.

If they have had contact with livestock, they should change clothes or coveralls and wash their hands with soap and water before entering the next farm.

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