

Connections

Marlborough Lines

Marlborough Lines Newsletter • Autumn 2015

Headlines

2014/15 discount on the way



In March a total of \$9.3m (including GST) was paid to electricity retailers for distribution to customers connected to the economic areas of Marlborough Lines' network.

The amount of discount will vary depending upon the energy consumption of individual customers, but a typical domestic customer as defined by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment using 8,000kWh per annum will receive a discount of \$226.38 (including GST).

The discount is in addition to the \$50 tax-free capital distribution which was paid to customers via the Marlborough Electric Power Trust (MEPT) through electricity retailers in December last year. A typical domestic customer will receive a total payment of \$276.38 from Marlborough Lines for the financial year ended 31 March 2015.

The amount of the 2015 discount takes the total of discounts paid to Marlborough Lines' customers since 1999 to \$102.4m. An additional \$17.5m has been paid to the MEPT as dividends.

No increase in line charges

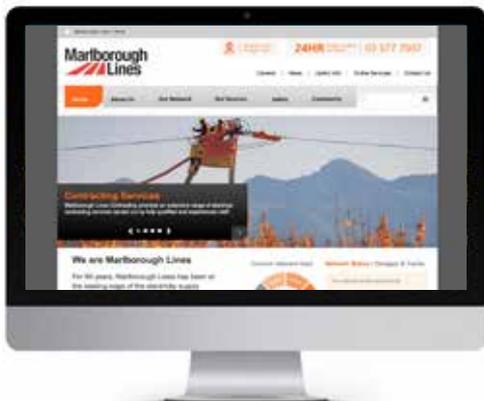
For the majority of customers, there will be no increase in Marlborough Lines' standard line charges for the financial year commencing 1 April 2015.

In this regard, please be aware that Marlborough Lines is only responsible for the component of your account which provides for transmission of the electricity over the national grid to Blenheim and the delivery of electricity from the Transpower substation in Blenheim to your premises.

It is your retailer who has responsibility for your energy charges and the format of your electricity account.



View our live outage map



We've added a new link to our website www.marlboroughlines.co.nz, where you can view live outage information. The viewer shows all current outages overlaid on a map of the top of the South Island, the time the outage started, the number of customers affected and the ETOR (Estimated Time of Restoration – time power is expected to return). The areas affected by the outage are indicated by polygons on the map. We hope you find this information useful.

Look out for this icon on our homepage:



View our live outage map

In this issue

- 2014/15 discount on the way
- No increase in line charges
- View our live outage map
- Help us find you
- Minimising the risk of fire
- Improving reliability
- Are your trees too close to power lines?
- Have a complaint?
- Supporting our community
- Look up and live
- Thinking about painting your house?
- Before you dig
- Get ready for winter

Help us find you

To identify where your installation is connected to our network and where it is located, Marlborough Lines uses a number which is unique to your property. This is called an ICP (Installation Connection Point) number, which can be found on your power bill.

The ICP number starts with 000, then has seven other digits, the letters ML, then three random characters e.g. 0001131505MLC82.

Sometimes we receive fault calls from customers in remote areas who do not have an exact address for their property. This makes it difficult for us to locate the premises to attend to the fault.

To ensure we can quickly determine where your property is located, please familiarise yourself with its ICP number. A good way to do that would be to write the ICP number in a place that is easily accessible, e.g. by your phone. That way when you call in you can tell us the number and we can quickly pinpoint the location of your property and fix the fault.

Your energy retailer holds your contact details and other personal information. If you have an address change please advise your energy retailer.

Minimising the risk of fire

The dry weather over the summer months has heightened the risk of fire, especially where trees are in close proximity to power lines.

Marlborough Lines has an extensive ongoing surveillance programme relative to trees and vegetation and seeks to eliminate problems before they occur. Part of our programme includes helicopter surveillance of lines but – as always – we appreciate customer feedback.

Over the summer months Marlborough Lines has worked in close cooperation with the Rural Fire Authority and because of the extreme fire risk in certain areas we have ceased the automatic restoration of supply and undertaken detailed line inspections before re-livening.

We regret that in some instances this has caused a delay in the restoration of customer supply but it is the view of Marlborough Lines and the Rural Fire Authority that ultimately a delay in the restoration of supply in high fire risk areas is in the best interests of all customers and the public.

Marlborough Lines has worked in conjunction with the Rural Fire Authority on a daily basis and adjusts its operating criteria to suit the situation prevailing at the time.



Marlborough Lines is committed to minimising its impact on the environment as demonstrated by its 33/11KV substation at 105 Redwood Street, Blenheim.



Improving reliability

In recent years considerable investment has been undertaken in terms of replacing old lines and substations to provide both increased capacity and reliability.

We have also installed a number of remotely operated circuit breakers and remotely operated generation which has the capacity to supply the outer Marlborough Sounds.

Similarly we have a number of large mobile generators which we utilise throughout Marlborough to provide an alternative supply should part of our network be unavailable.

It is also salient that we now undertake a wide range of work on a live line basis using our live line specialists to prevent disruption to your electricity supply.

The cumulative effects of improvements to the network and the use of remote and mobile generators, together with live line work, will result in the increased reliability of your power supply.

We believe the key to reliability of supply is undertaking prudent capital and maintenance expenditure. We do not see maintenance as an unnecessary cost but a necessary investment to provide you with a safe and reliable electricity supply.

Are your trees too close to power lines?

When trees grow too close to power lines they have the potential to cause power fluctuations and appliance damage, power failure, fire, electric shock or electrocution.

Tree owners are legally required to ensure their trees don't grow too close to power lines. The Electricity (Hazard from Trees) Regulations 2003 were introduced by the Government because trees need to be kept at a safe distance from electricity lines for public safety and to protect your electricity supply.

Learn about your responsibilities to help keep our network free of interference from trees at our website www.marlboroughlines.co.nz/Safety/Tree-and-Powerlines.

Please help us to help you

If you know of trees that are causing interference or have the potential to cause interference with an electricity line please give us a call on 03 577 7007.

Plant power line friendly trees

Please plant only recommended trees under or near our power lines. Recommended trees grow less than four metres tall and don't tend to shed branches or fronds.

For a list of recommended trees, visit our website www.marlboroughlines.co.nz/Documents/Recommended-trees.

Have a complaint? Have your say

Marlborough Lines is a member of the Electricity and Gas Complaints Commissioner Scheme and as such follows a standard process should a customer formally notify the Company of a concern involving a service that Marlborough Lines has provided. The Company's complaint handling process also covers complaints in relation to land issues including entry requirements, access and easements.

Should you have a complaint which you wish to be formally addressed please follow the steps set out below:

- Contact Marlborough Lines by either:
 - Visiting our Reception at 1 Alfred Street, Blenheim
 - Phoning our Customer Services Team on (03) 577 7007
 - Sending us a letter to PO Box 144 including details of your particular concern in relation to a service the Company has provided to you
- When Marlborough Lines has received your complaint we will provide acknowledgement to you within two days.
- Marlborough Lines will then investigate and endeavour to resolve your complaint, where possible within seven working days, and advise in writing where appropriate.
- If after 20 working days a resolution is not achieved you will be advised and you may subsequently decide to take your concern to the Electricity and Gas Complaints Commissioner. Should you wish to do so the Commissioner can be contacted using the details listed below.



PO Box 5875 Lambton Quay
Wellington 6145

Freephone: 0800 22 33 40

Freefax: 0800 22 33 47

Phone: +64 4 914 4630

Fax: +64 4 472 5854

Freepost: 192682

Email: info@egcomplaints.co.nz

For any problems with your electricity supply, call our 24 hour fault line: (03) 577 7007.



Community

Supporting our community

Aside from the Company's ongoing sponsorship of the Marlborough Lines Stadium 2000, we are also involved in the sponsorship of other community events.

Recent sponsorship includes:

- Tertiary Study Awards provided to Marlborough's top students
- Blenheim and Picton Christmas Parades
- Christmas in the Park
- Picton Maritime Festival
- Marlborough Wine and Food Festival
- Marlborough Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards.

The Company is also a sponsor of the 2015 Classic Fighters Omaka Airshow to be held over Easter, and will also assist with the provision of power supplies.

In 2003 we undertook the illumination of Pollard Park to mark the 80th anniversary of Marlborough Lines and its predecessors, and we have maintained the lighting ever since. If you haven't visited Pollard Park after dark you may wish to have a look. The nighttime illuminations provide a different perspective to one of Marlborough's most popular parks.

Last year we developed a small park and erected a kinetic wind sculpture at Leeds Quay to mark our 90th anniversary.



Safety

Look up and live

To meet the requirements of our customers there are in excess of 3,300km of lines throughout Marlborough. As a consequence it is especially important to consider the risks of making contact with overhead lines.

Sadly there have been a number of instances where the dangers of overhead lines have been forgotten and fatalities have resulted.

It is especially important to treat power lines as being live at all times – even those which are on the ground or in close proximity to the ground.

Regrettably there have been incidents where power lines have been in the proximity of the ground following a motor vehicle accident, the lines have been ignored and people electrocuted as a result.

A live line in direct or indirect contact with the ground can cause a voltage gradient across the ground sufficient to cause electrocution.

Hence it is very important to keep a safe distance away from all power lines.

Thinking about painting your house?

If you are about to paint your house or any other buildings and power lines are in the vicinity please do not take any unnecessary risks.

Please contact us to arrange for your electricity supply to be isolated so that you are safe.

Regrettably on occasions the danger of painting in the vicinity of live lines has been overlooked and there have been tragic consequences as a result.

Before you dig

Just as contact with overhead power lines is to be avoided, the same applies to underground cables.

It is especially important that before you dig – either by hand, with an excavator or post hole borer, or even drive a metal stake into the ground – that you consider the possible presence of underground power cables. If in doubt identify any cables in your work area.

There are a number of examples of where people have disregarded the potential hazards of underground cables and lost their lives as a result.

If you have any doubts as to the location of underground power cables, please do not hesitate to give us a call.

Environment

Get ready for winter

With the cooler weather on its way it's a good time to think about how you can be more energy efficient and keep your electricity costs at a minimum.

Using compact fluorescent or LED lights and installing good insulation are just a couple of ways you can save.

The EECA Energywise website, www.energywise.govt.nz, is full of practical information and advice to help you make energy efficient choices at home and on the road.

You can also talk to one of our customer services staff about energy efficiency by phoning (03) 577 7007.