



Christmas message and holiday office hours

The Marlborough Lines team wishes you all a bright and merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.

Our offices will

Close: Friday 23 December 2022 at 3.00pm

Re-open: Monday 9 January 2023 at 8.00am

For urgent faults call us 24/7 on 03 577 7007

Note: An "urgent" fault is where you have a power outage, see lines down, or damage to network equipment that may pose a risk to people or property.

If you have no power please check your main switch board, prior to reporting the fault. If the fault is reported to us and we find the fault to be on your installation, and not our network, we may invoice for any costs incurred.

Boat Safety

Boating is one of Marlborough's most popular recreational activities and we want to ensure you stay safe doing it.

- Whether on the land or in the water, carefully look around and up before raising or moving sailboat masts, oars or fishing poles. A sailboat mast, spar, rigging, antenna or flag mast poses potential danger around power lines. Power lines may cross small bodies of water and launching ramps, so watch out for overhead electric lines near boat docks and piers.
- When hauling, docking or transporting a boat, be sure to remove or lower any metal equipment that could come in to contact with power lines.
- Remember, high voltage electricity can jump to your mast or aerial if they get near enough to a power line which can result in serious burns or death for you or those nearby.
- If a boat mast has brought down the power lines around a car, the safest way to avoid electric shock is for occupants to stay in the car until help arrives.
- They should only try to get away from the car if another urgent matter, such as a fire in the car, forces them to evacuate, and should jump well clear of the vehicle

Reflecting on the power of teamwork

After recovering from a one-hundred-year rain event in 2021, Marlborough was once again hit with widespread disruption and damage to roads, infrastructure and power supply in mid-August this year. Marlborough Lines crew were at the forefront of the recovery as our team worked in difficult conditions to regain access and reconnect power to residents in remote areas, cut off by slips and flood waters.

As the company responsible for the distribution of electricity in the region, Marlborough Lines acted before the storm hit to plan and prepare as best it could.

As the storm swept through the region, Marlborough Lines Network Operations General Manager Warner Nichol donned his Incident Manager hat to guide and oversee the electricity company's response to power outages caused by falling trees, slips and flooding rivers.

With widespread damage, remote locations and constantly evolving events, Marlborough Lines had to prioritise where and how its people and resources were deployed, Warner says.

"With so many roads closed due to slips, helicopters were used extensively to identify faults in more remote areas, and we set priorities based on the numbers of customers affected and the difficulty of the work."

More than 5,000 homes experienced interruptions to power supply during the August storm, with the average outage lasting 14.5 hours, he says.

At the peak of the crisis, on Saturday August 20, 1,300 customers were without power. The longest power outage was seven days, affecting 16 customers on the western side of the Branch River bridge on State Highway 63, which was washed out, closing the highway for three weeks. Along with the bridge, the poles crossing the river were also washed out and repairs could not be made until the water had receded.

Central to the company's response was the Marlborough Lines Network Control team, which literally have their fingers on the pulse of the region's power infrastructure. As Network Controller

Daniel Seabrook, who was the on-call Duty Controller during the August storm event says, "if anything happens within the network, we're the first to know about it."

"Once a fault has been identified we arrange for the Field Service staff to attend and facilitate safe access to the network, by isolating the fault and giving them instructions to get in and do the restoration work."

While the network controllers have a big picture view of the network, they rely heavily on information from field service staff, who are "the eyes and ears" of the network, Daniel says.

Marlborough Lines Field Services Operations Manager Dan Quinn was in constant contact with Daniel Seabrook during the restoration period, directing crew out all around the region to repair faults, based on their information.

Most of the damage inflicted was in the Kenepuru Sound and areas north in the most remote parts of the network, which only added to the complexity of their response, Dan says.

"With many slips and electrical faults along Kenepuru Road impacting a large number of the customers in the sounds, Marlborough Lines trucks, loaded with gear and line mechanics took the three-hour barge trip to the outer Kenepuru Sound," Dan says.

"Local civil company Lesley Bothers assisted to clear routes through slips and Marlborough Helicopters helped to lift gear, poles, and people into hard to reach parts of the sounds to restore power to customers."

Diesel for the backup generators was also barged out to Kenepuru Heads, to keep residents' power on as much as possible while repairs were made.

The team worked huge hours in heavy rain and mud to get power back on, and despite the conditions, the crew did an "amazing job", Dan says.

"We're very lucky to be so well resourced and very proud to have the crew we've got in Marlborough, who are all technically very capable and multi-skilled."

