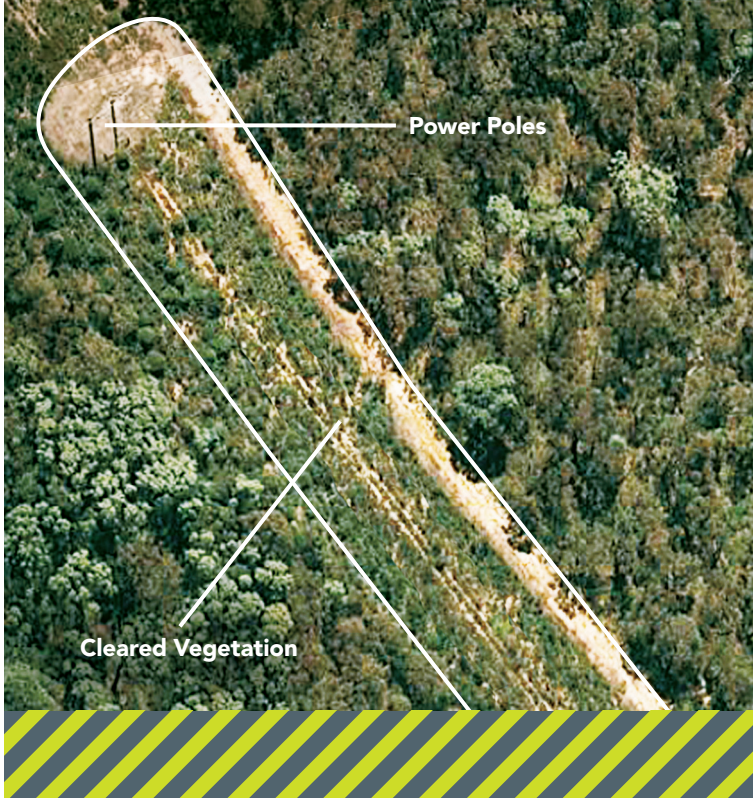
Power lines pose a significant risk to low flying (below 60m/200ft) aircraft as they can be difficult to see, regardless of the weather conditions, and can quite easily blend into the surroundings and horizon.

Power lines come in many configurations – from high voltage mains carried by large, highly visible towers and poles to far spanning Single Wire Earth Return (SWER) networks with low profile poles. All power lines have the potential to cause serious harm. You don't need to touch power lines for electricity to conduct. It can arc and conduct through objects in an instant.

Flying below 60 metres (200ft) is fraught with danger so it is critical that every flight is surveyed beforehand and that your pre-flight plan includes the location of power lines. Irregular terrain patterns and high trees can obstruct the view of power lines and electrical infrastructure. Power lines often cross waterways such as rivers, reservoirs and lakes. Vegetation and other obstacles may obscure the view of power lines and poles. Therefore, pilots should not rely on the sighting of poles as a sole method for detecting power lines.



Identifying power lines

There are several indicators pilots may use to identify the location of power lines.

01 Assume that in populated areas, rural, semi rural and suburbia, power lines are present.

02 Power poles are a clear indicator of power lines.

03 Look out for fire breaks or cleared areas of vegetation. They usually indicate the presence of power lines.

04 Be aware that some poles and towers also have a single wire located above the mains for lightning protection. The wire is extremely difficult to see and is near invisible in low visibility conditions.

05 Familiarise yourself with the location of power lines by studying maps of the area, carry current charts and always check En Route Supplement Australia (ERSA), NOTAMs (Notice to Airman) and the weather before flying.

Points to remember

01 Before flying low an Agricultural level 2 rating or low flying endorsement must be approved by CASA.

02 Do not fly low unless it is absolutely necessary to complete the job.

03 Always plan ahead so you are aware of the location of all hazards including the location of power lines and poles.

04 Keep in mind that power lines also exist in remote areas where you least expect them.

05 Exercise extreme caution when flying low.

POWER LINE SAFETY FOR PILOTS

SAFETY EXCELLENCE

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Endeavour Energy: **131 081**

CASA: **131 757**

ATSB: **1800 020 616**

If you have any questions about what you should do to stay safe around power lines and other electrical infrastructure please call 131 081 or visit us at www.endeavourenergy.com.au

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