

Duvauchelle to Akaroa pole renewal

Frequently asked questions

Why are Orion doing this work?

Some of the poles on the line between Duvauchelle and Akaroa are nearing the end of their serviceable life. We are renewing the poles on this line to ensure the future reliability of the power network. By replacing older poles in a planned way, we can avoid unplanned outages should a pole come down in a storm. If a pole on this line was to come down in a storm it may take others with it. Repairs in emergency response conditions could take days and see many customers without power during this period.

What is the benefit for the community?

Orion proactively manages its network. This means that we are constantly managing and maintaining our lines, poles, substations and equipment. By renewing the poles along this line, we can ensure our network remains reliable for the future which means fewer unplanned outages for our customers.

Where are you working?

We are working on the line between Duvauchelle and Akaroa. Some of the poles are located on private property and others next to the road.

How do you know if a pole needs fixing or replacing?

Poles typically last between 40-60 years and there are some on the Duvauchelle to Akaroa line that have been in service this long. We have a database of all Orion poles on our network and an overall inspection, maintenance and replacement plan for these.

How many Orion poles fail?

There are about 90,000 power poles in our network. Of these, less than 0.01% (10) fail per year, most during high winds. Failure of a pole does not usually mean it falls to the ground.

Why don't you just wait until a pole fails and then fix it?

Orion operates a safe and reliable network. If a pole fails it could take us some time to fix, particularly if it's in a remote location. If this happens, customers could be without power for days.

Why is the work being done now?

Some of the poles are on steep terrain. We need dry weather to be able to access these hard to reach places. We have started the work after the main holiday period to reduce the impact on customers and will have three contractors working simultaneously to get the work done as quickly as possible.

Why does the power need to be switched off?

We are working on about 115 poles, refurbishing some and replacing others. To do this work safely we need to switch the power off.

Why aren't generators used to supply power during planned outages?

Sometimes we use temporary generators on the network to keep customers supplied during planned outages. Where we use generators depends on the way the network is set up, the length of the outage, the number of customers affected and the potential impacts of the outage. Unfortunately, we can't put every property on temporary generator, but we do the best we can.

Will the power be switched off in Akaroa?

We have used generators to make sure the Akaroa township has power during these essential works.

Why is my power switched off for a short time in the morning and afternoon?

Customers who will have their power supplied using a generator on the network, will experience a short outage in the morning and afternoon when we switch them from the network to the generator. Most of the time you will not notice the switch, however you could experience a short outage of less than fifteen minutes. You will receive notification from your retailer about these short outages.

What happens if you can't work, for example if the weather is bad?

If we can't work, or the work takes a bit longer, we have contingency days on the 18 and 25 February, and the 8, 10, 15 and 17 of March.

Can the power pole be moved?

No, the poles cannot be moved. They will be refurbished or replaced where they are.

Why are only some of the poles being replaced?

Not all the poles need replacing, some of them just require renewal of the equipment on the pole.

What happens to the old poles?

The old poles and hardware will be disposed of sustainably. We try to recycle the metal and other materials and the poles are on-sold for non-commercial purposes such as playgrounds and parks. Where we are working on private property, the property owners often want to retain the poles for their use, and we try to accommodate this where possible.

Why are there three different contractors working on the project?

We have three contractors working on different sections of the Duvauchelle to Akaroa line simultaneously to complete the work as quickly as possible.

How will I know if my power will be switched off?

Your electricity retailer will let you know if your power will be switched off. You can also sign up for our outage notification service which will keep you in the know on planned outages at <https://www.oriongroup.co.nz/customers/be-prepared/outage-notifications/>

Our website has information on how to prepare for outages at <https://www.oriongroup.co.nz/customers/be-prepared/>

You can also call our Customer Support Team on 0800 363 9898 for information, day or night.

Why have I received more than one notice from my electricity retailer?

When we plan an outage, we let electricity retailers know and they then notify their customers. As this is a major project, working on many poles, there are outages over several days. You may receive a notice from your retailer for each outage that affects your property.

My neighbour received a text about the outage, why didn't I get a message?

We have a notification service for planned outages. You can sign up for this service on our website at <https://www.oriongroup.co.nz/customers/be-prepared/>