

Monday 23 January 2012

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## SP AusNet implements bushfire recommendations

As part of the Government's response to the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission's recommendations, this summer electricity distribution businesses, including SP AusNet, have been directed to alter electrical device settings in high bushfire risk areas on total fire ban and code red days.

Where this isn't possible, distribution businesses can suppress the reclose function on single wire earth return (SWER) powerlines with auto circuit reclosers (ACRs) for the duration of the worst bushfire risk period set by Fire Services Commissioner, starting January 23 for around six weeks.

David Matassoni, SP AusNet Network Safety Manager, said that SP AusNet will allocate the resources to make the setting changes on the morning of total fire ban (TFB) or code red days to minimise supply disruption to customers.

"SP AusNet will suppress the reclose function on around 90 SWER ACR devices in high fire consequential areas on the morning of TFB or code red days during the six-week period of highest bushfire risk as declared today by the Fire Services Commissioner, rather than suppressing for the whole six weeks," Mr Matassoni said.

"By mobilising teams to manually change device settings as bushfire risks are declared, the devices won't be as susceptible to common faults from surrounding vegetation and animal interference, which will reduce supply disruptions and improve reliability for our customers," he said.

SP AusNet will also make available a helicopter to support ground patrol crews, as required, to assist with line patrolling and restoration of supply to around 3500 SWER customers in the highest fire loss consequence areas.

In addition, SP AusNet is also directed to alter the protection settings on 22kV circuit breakers and ACRs that supply the highest fire loss consequence areas on TFB and code red days. These changes will be made remotely by the operations team.

SP AusNet recommends that all residents have a plan to manage without electricity.

"Each year, it's important that all residents take the necessary steps to plan for being without power, particularly in extreme weather or high fire danger conditions," Mr Matassoni said.

These include:

- Consider your need for back-up power supply if you are highly reliant on electricity.
- Ensure you have a fully charged mobile phone and a spare battery.
- Have a battery powered radio and spare batteries available to hear warning announcements.
- Get a non-electric pump that can be operated from an alternative water supply such as a swimming pool, concrete or metal tank or dam.
- Arrange for alternative accommodation in case you need to leave your home and have your important contact numbers handy, including close neighbours, relatives and emergency services.

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In the event of power loss, please contact SP AusNet's electricity fault team on 13 17 99 to report the fault.

Click [here](#) to view the Government's response to the Powerline Bushfire Safety Taskforce report.

## About SP AusNet

SP AusNet operates the electricity network (poles and wires) servicing more than 640,000 customers in the outer northern and eastern suburbs of Melbourne and eastern and north-eastern Victoria.

## Glossary

**Single Wire Earth Return (SWER):** A single-wire powerline supplying electrical (single-phase) power to sparsely populated areas.

**Automatic Circuit Recloser (ACR):** A circuit breaker that disconnect supply when it detects a fault on the line and then attempts to reclose the circuit in case that fault has cleared.

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