

Switching on bushfire prevention

14 August 2018

Electricity and gas

The state's energy regulator has finalised new rules for the electricity network, enabling the application of new electrical safety equipment to prevent bushfires.

Changes to voltage variation limits on high voltage powerlines, will allow distributors to operate the new equipment at 45 substations in Victoria's highest bushfire risk areas – a recommendation of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.

The equipment – rapid earth fault current limiters or REFCLs – reduces the power flowing through a fallen power line to prevent electrical sparks igniting a fire during extreme weather.

The commission's director of energy, Sarah McDowell says changing the standards in Victoria's Electricity Distribution Code supports the operation of the new technology, after new bushfire safety legislation came into effect in 2016.

“This new technology required us to update our technical regulations – so we needed to undertake a review.

“We worked with Energy Safe Victoria to make sure these changes to the regulations are aligned with the bushfire safety legislation and allow REFCLs to be switched on when needed.

“We also heard from distributors and high voltage customers. Our changes to the code will encourage them to work together to get this bushfire prevention equipment installed and operating as soon as possible.

“To progress the roll-out of REFCLs the changes to the voltage standards will come into effect on Monday 20 August 2018.

The first batch of REFCLs are currently being installed with the roll out and operation of REFCLs at all 45 sites expected by May 2023.

Read more about the changes to the [voltage standards](#).

For general enquiries

Phone: [\(+61 3\) 9032 1300](tel:+61390321300) or [1300 664 969](tel:1300664969)

Email: reception@esc.vic.gov.au

You can also find us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

For VEU enquiries

Phone: [\(+61 3\) 9032 1310](tel:+61390321310) or submit a [contact form](#).

For media enquiries

If you have a media enquiry, please contact:

Michelle Bryne

michelle.bryne@esc.vic.gov.au

0437 677 385

(03) 9032 1324

Subscribe

Visit our [newsletters page](#) to subscribe to receive email updates from us and view previous editions of

Essential News.

To learn more, visit www.esc.vic.gov.au