

General Complaint - NS Power and municipal electric utilities

Reference Number: 250223001

Submitted on: Sunday, February 23 2025 at 05:08:36 PM (AST)

Contact Information

Name on account: Martin and Wendy Tanner

Account number: 00001801

Business contact:

Account address:

Address 1:

Address 2:

City:

Province: NS

Postal code:

Country: Canada

Email Address:

Mailing address:

Address 1:

Address 2:

City:

Province: Nova Scotia

Postal code:

Country: Canada

Telephone number:

Alternate phone number:

Complaint Information

Type of complaint:

Maintenance/Location of Power Poles/Easements

Additional details:

On approximately Aug 29 2024 we purchased a property at [REDACTED]. While doing some maintenance on the property i noticed how close the electrical distribution lines and telecom lines are to the main structure of our property. I contacted the utility about my safety concerns and they sent out a representative who was somewhat elusive about the codes but left me with the distinct feeling that the current situation would not meet current safety standards. he referenced costs and said he would get back to me with the cost to remediate the situation. I then contacted the UARB to find out the standard and was directed to reach out to the utility which i did and was told there would be a discussion of the situation at their next board meeting.

Did they contact the utility? Yes

How did the utility respond?

How do they want the complaint resolved?

I would like to have the current situation remediated so that we are in a position of safety and meeting the current code. I would suggest that either the appropriate poles be installed to create the proper clearances or the lines be buried to facilitate the safe distribution of service. I'm not interested in a band aid solution of placing insulation over the primaries or secondaries. As a side note We recently installed poles and area lighting at a location in the town of Lunenburg also a municipal utility and were required to bury the lines as we were not permitted to have the service lines cross over the roof of our buildings. We were required to maintain safe clearance distances from the structures and these were only 120 volt lines not 7200 volts in the distribution primaries. I very well understand cost implications however safety is safety and if previous administrations have kicked the code and safety issues down the road that cannot continue to be acceptable and at some point issues must be addressed and made compliant. Again see attached emails Thank you for your time and I look forward to a fair equitable and time bound solution to this issue Kind Regards Martin Tanner

Supporting documents uploaded:

- REC emails.pdf

Subject: Re: safety concern power distribution lines

Date: 02/20/25 10:56 AM

To: mmtanner [REDACTED]

From: David Maxwell <dmaxwell@chebucto.ns.ca>

Update: Your issue was discussed at our Board meeting on Feb. 19. No definitive resolution was reached, but it was noted that your property is very far from being unique - there are apparently multiple similar situations throughout our area., (and even more in Mahone Bay And if we do something at your property it will set a precedent which multiple others will cite. At a cost of ~ \$10,000 to resolve each one, we simply do not have the resources to fix every one. (The situation is the result of 100 years of changing regulations - or no regulations).

Apparently all the suggestions which were made, (moving poles across the road, behind your house, putting in taller poles), would all cost pretty much the same. One idea which was raised was to replace the lines running in front of your house with heavy duty insulated wires. This would apparently cost less over all, (but would still require the cost for traffic control - who'd a thunk this was such a lucrative business? I am damn sure the poor sods who are actually out in the elements doing the job aren't getting a fair share of this sum.) Do you have any thoughts as to whether this would work for you? (We have instructed Phil to price this out and report back.)

While I suggested it was completely irrelevant to your concerns, I was instructed to make you aware that any actions RELC may take to fix the situation with power, carries no implication that any of the other services sharing the poles will move their lines also. Indeed, apparently, according to Phil, Eastlink in particular, when directly approached when we had to move lines, (eg. to permit access), and offered the opportunity to profit from our having to hire traffic controllers, (at a cost of \$1500-\$2000!) flatly declined. Their lines are still present on rotting poles, bedecked with vegetation, adjacent to our new power line poles.

On 2025-02-11 08:23, mmtanner wrote:

Thank you for your quick response

I had an underlying notion that all things may not be right in the REC from correspondence and changes that were occurring etc.....

I do understand your situation and simply want to have a safe situation for my family and also for REC to not be in a liability situation.

I will follow up with you in the near future

Again thank you for your response

Kind regards

Martin Tanner

Sent from my Galaxy

----- Original message -----

From: David Maxwell <dmaxwell@chebucto.ns.ca>

Date: 2025-02-11 8:02 a.m. (GMT-04:00)

To: MartinTanner [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: safety concern power distribution lines

You are absolutely right, and you have proceeded absolutely correctly, (other than looking to the UARB for assistance.) This clearly has to be resolved. And Phil is indeed the person responsible to do so. I suspect Phil "didn't give a clear answer" because he doesn't have the authority to commit to doing the work. I suspect that he intends to bring the situation up at the next meeting of the Board, on Feb. 19, but I shall get ahold of him and find out what the situation is from his

perspective. (To be candid, I think there are larger issues of governance, responsibility and finances behind this, issues which the new Board is only recently beginning to ferret out. We were parachuted in, a complete new board, with no access to the background or history leading up to our current situation, and poorly defined organisational control structures. We are currently deeply involved in getting a firmer grasp on our situation.)

Is this message an adequate response at this time? If you still have unresolved concerns, please do call me to discuss or clarify [REDACTED]

On 2025-02-10 21:02, Martin Tanner wrote:

> Hello Mr. Maxwell

>

> My name is Martin Tanner I am contacting you about a safety concern I
> have with the distribution lines that front on our property.

>

> In late August we took possession of a property at [REDACTED]
> Middle Lahave and set up serviced with REC. While doing some brush
> clearing around one of the power poles that are abutting our property
> to improve sight lines along the highway I noticed what appeared to be
> a telecom line hanging down from above and leading into a binding
> post. I contacted a former Bell Aliant contact to ask what it may be
> for and during our conversation I mentioned how close the primary,
> secondary wires and the telecom cabling is to the front of our house.
> I can actually reach up from our front porch step and grasp onto the
> telecom wires. My wife and I have a significant concern about the
> safety of the distribution lines and as such I contacted Mahone
> Electric about the situation. Several weeks ago "Phil(?)" met me on
> site to discuss the situation and although I didn't receive a clear
> answer as to the actual code requirement I was left with the feeling
> that the current configuration would not pass current regulations. I
> am led to believe that there are improper clearance between the
> primary secondary and telecom cables. I also understand that there are
> around 7200 volts in the primary in front of our house and that these
> lines transect our property. We talked about moving the pole(s) to
> the opposite side of the road to which Phil suggested that it would
> require 3 new poles to be installed to meet the current standards for
> clearance. He also said it would be around 3-3500 dollars per pole to
> change them out. I have not received any further communication with
> Phil or REC or Mahone Electric as to this.

> I have had a conversation with Lisa Wallace at the URB looking for
> direction in this matter and it was recommended that I start with the
> service provider. Given the limited points of contact I am reaching
> out to your contact as Board Chair from the recent news letter that
> you sent out.

>

> I would appreciate a conversation with you regarding our legitimate
> concern. You can reach me at [REDACTED] cell or by return email.
> Please be assured we simply desire to have a safety issue resolved in
> a reasonable amicable manner in a reasonable time frame.

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> Thank you and kind regards

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