

7.3.11.1 Overhead Lines Maintenance

Overhead Line Patrolling

- 89 Helicopter patrols of OHLs are carried out once a year. These patrols will be advertised in advance.

Tree and Hedge Cutting to Maintain Clearances

- 90 Foot patrols of OHLs are carried out every five years. The landowners will be contacted in advance. ESB contractors will identify vegetation which has grown within the electrical clearance envelopes. Vegetation adjacent to the conductors which has the potential to fall onto the conductors and / or vegetation directly underneath the electricity line which has grown with close proximity will be cut or trimmed to ensure safety clearances. This maintenance activity will form part of the ongoing maintenance of the electricity line.

Towers

- 91 After approximately 35 to 40 years' service, tower painting of all steel towers will take place in order to get additional 15 to 20 years of steel corrosion prevention.

Insulator and Earthwire Hardware

- 92 It is estimated that 25% earthwire hardware replacement and less than 5% insulator replacement on the 400 kV line will be required after 30 years.

Foundation

- 93 No foundation maintenance work is generally required.

Conductor

- 94 No conductor maintenance work is generally required.

7.3.12 Decommissioning

- 95 The proposed development will become a permanent part of the transmission infrastructure. The expected lifespan of the development is in the region of 50 to 80 years. This will be achieved by routine maintenance and replacement of hardware as required. There are no plans for the decommissioning of the overhead line or existing substation. In the event that part of, or the entire proposed infrastructure is to be decommissioned, all towers, equipment and material to be decommissioned will be removed off site and the land reinstated. Material from the overhead line, such as steel members from the towers will be taken for recycling where possible. Specific decommissioning works would include:

- Fittings and / or hardware such as spacers dampers, and insulators would be removed from the circuit. The conductors would be winched onto drums in a reverse stringing process to that described in **section 7.3.4.4.1**;
- The tower would be dismantled, with sections disconnected for removal from site; and
- Typically the foundations would be removed to approximately 1m deep and subsoil and topsoil reinstated.

96 The decommissioning of the proposed development, if it is to occur, would be undertaken many decades into the future. It is likely that the baseline conditions will have changed to a greater or lesser degree, however, it is likely that the effects of decommissioning would be temporary and of a similar scale or less than the construction phase. Similar mitigation measures as described in the EIS (and as summarised in **Table 11.1**) should be implemented to ensure the minimisation or elimination of any environmental impacts.

7.4 HEALTH & SAFETY

7.4.1 Design & Construction

97 During the design and throughout the construction of the proposed development the client, designers, project supervisors, contractors, and workers will be required to comply with all applicable Health and Safety legislation and practice.

98 ESB has policies, procedures and systems, which will be in place, in the unlikely event of an accident or emergency incident occurring during the construction of the proposed development.