



# Corporate Public Position Statement

Electric and Magnetic Fields

April 2023

**nationalgrid**

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# Electric and Magnetic Fields

## Objective

Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMFs) can be generated from a wide variety of sources, including distribution and transmission power lines and wireless infrastructure. National Grid recognises that there is scientific debate about whether certain adverse health effects may be linked to EMFs. As a consequence, there is public concern around the subject.

We take the responsible management of EMFs very seriously. This public position statement sets the framework within which National Grid will manage EMFs. We will:

- Continually assess the scientific evidence in this area;
- Determine any implications for the way in which we conduct our business; and
- Explain to society what the science is telling us.

The President of Electricity Transmission is responsible for ensuring that this public position statement reflects and is compliant with current legislation and is kept up to date with new or changing legislation.

## Scope

This public position statement applies to National Grid and its Subsidiary Companies. For Associate Companies, National Grid will seek to promote the adoption of statements and practices consistent with those set out in this document.

This statement covers:

- EMFs that arise from transmission and distribution power lines and associated equipment; and
- Radio-frequency EMFs that arise from wireless infrastructure, including from third-party assets.

## Framework

Electric and Magnetic Fields can arise from many sources including household appliances, electrical distribution and transmission facilities and equipment, mobile telephones, and radio-transmission devices. Research is ongoing to improve our understanding of the effects of EMFs. The balance of evidence remains **against** both power-frequency and radio-frequency EMFs causing ill health. However, National Grid recognises that the World Health Organization has classified power-frequency EMFs as “possibly” carcinogenic. This scientific position is reflected in the views of the regulatory bodies in the countries in which we operate.

We also recognise that scientific developments on EMFs do not depend on international boundaries. This public position statement establishes the common threads applicable across all our operations.

### **This public position statement has seven central principles:**

1. We recognise that the societies in which we operate hold a variety of views on EMFs. In view of the scientific position and the fact that EMFs are of concern to some, we take the matter very seriously.
2. In all our operations, as a minimum, we comply with legal requirements, including relevant EMF regulations. We also aim to follow industry guidelines or best practice in the countries and different jurisdictions in which we operate. Where other companies (such as telecommunications operators) use our assets, we require them to do the same.
3. We support the view of regulators and governments that the EMF issue warrants consideration for a precautionary approach. We look to them to decide on any measures that may be necessary, as they can evaluate the science and weigh-up costs and benefits on behalf of society as a whole.
4. To mitigate the amenity impact of new overhead transmission lines, we always endeavour to route them:
  - along formal Rights of Way in countries where they exist; or
  - away from existing buildings where they do not.

In order to ensure safety clearances and to help us maintain our network, we do not encourage housing development immediately beneath our lines. We will work with planning bodies to promote the sustainable use of land under our lines. These steps will usually result in EMF exposures being lower than would otherwise be the case.

5. We recognise that scientific understanding of any effects of EMFs is improving. We review all relevant scientific developments in this area from across the world and assess any implications for the way in which we operate.
6. We support high-quality research into EMFs and make the results available for scientific review.
7. We communicate in an open manner with those who have an interest in EMF matters, and make available information that will help society's understanding of EMFs. We will participate openly and constructively in debate on precautionary approaches appropriate to the EMF issue.

In support of this public position statement, each Subsidiary Company will ensure that:

- A plan is put in place to ensure all relevant elements of this public position statement are implemented.
- All regulatory and legal requirements are met for both new and existing lines and infrastructure.
- All legal non-compliances or suspected non-compliances are investigated, and if appropriate, prompt corrective actions taken. Associate Companies will be encouraged to put similar arrangements in place.

## Related Corporate Policies and Other Documents

- Framework for Responsible Business.
- Environment policy.
- Safety and Occupational Health policy.
- Terms of Reference of the Safety, Environment and Health Committee.

## Key Contacts

This public position statement is written and maintained by the President of Electricity Transmission, to whom questions regarding its content and application should be addressed.

The lead expert for this public position statement and the first point of contact is Dr Hayley Tripp, EMF Specialist, Electricity Transmission.

## Monitoring and Compliance

The President of Electricity Transmission is responsible for ensuring that this public position statement is effectively communicated throughout its lifecycle.

The President of Electricity Transmission will ensure that compliance with this public position statement is reviewed periodically. Any changes needed to ensure its effectiveness will be drawn to the attention of the Board's Safety, Environment and Health Committee and to the Board itself.

Each Subsidiary Company will ensure that it has the necessary arrangements in place to monitor and report compliance against this public position statement periodically. Each Associate Company will be encouraged to put in place similar arrangements to enable compliance to be reported periodically.

In line with good corporate governance practices, we will review this public position statement periodically.

The Corporate Environmental Audit Programme will be used from time-to-time to determine the level of compliance with all, or aspects of, this public position statement.

## Definitions

**Associate Company:** A company whose equity share capital is 20% or more, but not more than 50%, beneficially owned by a National Grid company or companies.

**Subsidiary Company:** A company that is a subsidiary of National Grid provided that a National Grid company holds or controls a majority of the voting rights in it or the right to appoint or remove a majority of its directors.

## Review Cycle

This Public Position Statement came into effect in 2003.

It was last reviewed in April 2023.

The next review will take place no later than April 2025.

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