

## How Much Do Power Lines Lower Real Estate Value?

*Written by Jane Meggitt; Updated June 23, 2018*

You've found the house of your dreams. It's beautiful, spacious and has wonderful views, at least from some angles. Other windows look out on nearby power lines, which few people find attractive. Aesthetics, however, aren't the problem if you're considering purchasing a house near power lines. Those utility company necessities might allow you to buy the house for less money than a comparable dwelling away from power lines, but they can also affect your resale value. In short, there are a lot of people who won't consider buying a property located close to power lines, even if they can save money on the purchase.



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### Lower Property Values

Proximity to power lines may lower a property's value by as much as 30 percent, although that's the higher end and usually refers to isolated incidents. A Rhode Island group, the Friends of India Point Park, is trying to have high-voltage power lines moved underground cites the 30 percent number on its website, and the documentation it uses shows that some studies confirm that number. Still, it's reasonable to assume that power line proximity has an overall negative effect on value of at least 10 percent, and possibly more.



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power lines did sell for less, but not significantly so. With an average sale price of \$291,000, researchers found a Portland home abutting a power line sold for approximately \$5,000 less than a comparable home not near a power line. In Seattle, the average sale price was \$502,000, and houses abutting a power line sold for approximately \$12,500 less. The real question is, just how dangerous are power lines and how do they affect human health?

### **Electromagnetic Fields**

Countless studies have been conducted on the effect of electromagnetic fields (EMFs) generated by power lines and their affect on people. The problem is that these studies have not come to a definite conclusion. About half of the studies conclude there is no real risk, while approximately just over one-fifth cite DNA damage from long-term EMF exposure and one-third had mixed results. EMFs are rumored to cause cancer, birth defects or miscarriages, low birth weight and heart abnormalities, but again, evidence is inconclusive. Those studies that found some correlation between power lines and cancer, in particular, don't address what distance is considered safe or how much exposure is needed to cause health problems.

### **Contact the Utility**

If you fall in love with a property near power lines and resale value isn't a concern, you can lay your fears to rest, or perhaps have them confirmed, by contacting the electric utility and requesting an on-site reading, according to real estate company Zillow. If you're handy, you can conduct your own readings using a magnetometer. If you decide to buy, you're making an informed decision based on the EMF levels near the home.



**References (4)**

- Zillow: How Close Is Too Close to Power Lines?

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- [Appraisal Institute: The Effect of High-Voltage Overhead Transmission Lines on Property Values: A Review of the Literature Since 2010](#)
- [NAR Realtor: The Price Effects of HVTLs on Abutting Homes](#)

### About the Author



Jane Meggitt has been a writer for more than 20 years. In addition to reporting for a major newspaper chain, she has been published in "Horse News," "Suburban Classic," "Hoof Beats," "Equine Journal" and other publications. She has a Bachelor of Arts in English from New York University and an Associate of Arts from the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, New York City.

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