

Safety Notice

Notice to all network stakeholders

Issue 13 | Rev 0 | August 2024

Powerco 11kV Conductor Brought Down by Helicopter

Incident

During a liquid fertilizer application flight, a helicopter's skid has hit and brought down a Powerco 11kV conductor at a farm in Taihape. The Pilot flying the helicopter had come over a treeline and didn't see the lines until he was nearly upon them. By the time he pulled up the skid had hit and broken one of the three lines. The helicopter was safe to land and only had minor surface damage (as pictured).



How did it happen?

- Environmental conditions: Cloudy, dreary day reducing visibility. Tree Line close to line location.
- Planning: this was a new block / client – helicopter company hadn't worked there before and didn't have their flight system (Tebula) set up for this property yet due to time constraints. The pilot relied on a reconnaissance flight with the farmer.
- Human Factors: distraction, workload, competing priorities. The pilot was the owner/operator of the company, with competing responsibilities he was considering: training/safety of a new pilot, workload backlog due to helicopter repairs, and the risk of spray drift to a nearby paddock.

Key Learnings & follow up actions:

- Ensure the setup of planning systems (e.g. Tebula) are prioritised before commencing a job.
- Obtain GIS Viewer access for Powerco Lines info.
- Minimise safety critical tasks when considering multiple competing priorities (distractions).

Please distribute to all relevant staff immediately

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