

Contact for further Info:

Geoff Thorburn – GM Operations

Email: gthorburn@powernet.co.nz

Mobile: 021 223 6907

Safety Alert

WARN

Issued: 8/07/2026

Security Class: PowerNet Employees & External (with NDA's)

AM-WAR-0018 – Work Advisory Restriction Notice – Softwood Pole Removal

This safety alert is to communicate AM-WAR-0018- Work Advisory Restriction Notice - Softwood Pole Removal.

**Restrictions:**

How to access softwood poles and to mitigate the risks associated with softwood pole removal, please refer to the internal process available at:

<https://au.promapp.com/powernet/Process/Minimode/Permalink/G30ee2hYkXiNSfbkEHTtED>

In addition to that any work involving removal, extraction, transport, or handling of softwood poles shall adopt the following precautionary controls:

1. Prior to removal, complete a visual assessment of the pole condition, paying particular attention to:
 - Knot rings
 - Vertical splitting
 - Cracks
 - Signs of decay or damage
 - Previous tagging history
2. Where there is potential for load change or instability during removal, the pole shall be secured using secondary restraint methods such as:
 - Crane support

HSE Team have provided all identified external and internal interested parties with this Safety Alert.

NOTE: HSE Team are the only authority to release and circulate this Safety Alert.

- Pole grabs
 - Chains or approved securing devices
3. Personnel shall remain clear of the potential fall or failure zone during extraction activities.
 4. Extra caution shall be exercised when removing poles with significant knot rings, particularly within 1.5 m to 3 m above ground level, as this has been identified as a common failure location in softwood poles.
 5. The preferred method for work at height on softwood poles remains the use of an MEWP where reasonably practicable.
 6. Any pole exhibiting abnormal movement, cracking, or structural instability during removal shall be treated as unsafe, and the activity reassessed before continuing.
 7. If any concerns exist regarding pole integrity or safe removal methodology, work shall stop and advice shall be sought from:
 - Field Manager
 - Asset Management / Engineering

Work Advisory Restriction Notice (WARN) for Softwood Pole Removal

Background:

On 18 February 2026, a softwood pole failed during removal activities at Milton Prison Farm. The pole snapped approximately 2.5 metres above ground level during extraction activities. No injuries or equipment damage occurred; however, the incident had significant potential risk to personnel and plant.

This event is the second reported softwood pole failure within the past 12 months, first one was broken in the pole rack while being tied down when removing and the latest one failed at or near the first knot ring. Investigation and engineering review indicate that softwood poles can fail suddenly during removal due to changes in loading and stresses applied during extraction, particularly around knot ring locations.

Although inspection records and testing may indicate acceptable in-service condition, removal activities can impose loading conditions significantly different from normal service conditions. As a result, additional controls are required when removing or handling softwood poles.

Restriction:

How to access softwood poles and to mitigate the risks associated with softwood pole removal, please refer to the internal process available at:

<https://au.promapp.com/powernet/Process/Minimode/Permalink/G30ee2hYkXiNSfbkEHTtED>

In addition to that any work involving removal, extraction, transport, or handling of softwood poles shall adopt the following precautionary controls:

1. Prior to removal, complete a visual assessment of the pole condition, paying particular attention to:



- Knot rings
 - Vertical splitting
 - Cracks
 - Signs of decay or damage
 - Previous tagging history
2. Where there is potential for load change or instability during removal, the pole shall be secured using secondary restraint methods such as:
 - Crane support
 - Pole grabs
 - Chains or approved securing devices
 3. Personnel shall remain clear of the potential fall or failure zone during extraction activities.
 4. Extra caution shall be exercised when removing poles with significant knot rings, particularly within 1.5 m to 3 m above ground level, as this has been identified as a common failure location in softwood poles.
 5. The preferred method for work at height on softwood poles remains the use of an MEWP where reasonably practicable.
 6. Any pole exhibiting abnormal movement, cracking, or structural instability during removal shall be treated as unsafe, and the activity reassessed before continuing.
 7. If any concerns exist regarding pole integrity or safe removal methodology, work shall stop and advice shall be sought from:
 - Field Manager
 - Asset Management / Engineering