SAFETY CRITICAL INFORMATION

Northern Ireland Electricity Networks

SCI Number: **26/03** ***Date of Issue:*** ***13 March 2026***

Subject: **Excavator Jib Extension - near miss**

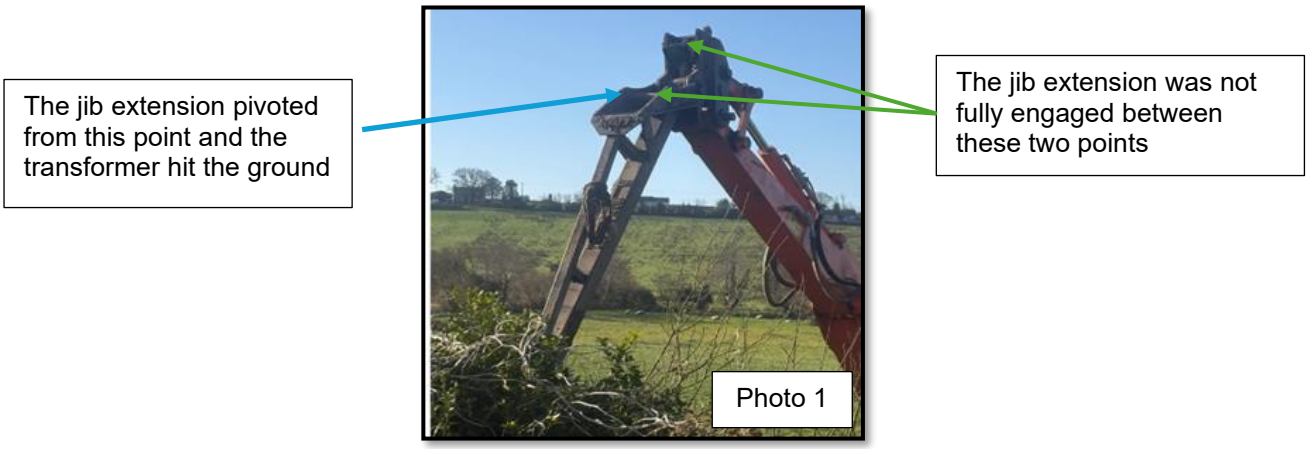
Target Audience: **All Authorised Persons**

Detail:

A contracting partner team were in the process of replacing a pole mounted transformer using a 7-ton excavator and a jib extension.

Using the jib extension fitted to the excavator, the operator took up the weight of the transformer. The Linesperson loosened the bolts securing the transformer then instructed the operator to lift the transformer and move it clear of the pole. Once the transformer was clear of the pole it was lowered towards the ground.

During this operation the jib extension pitched forward with the transformer approx. 4m off the ground, causing the transformer to hit the ground, with the jib extension subsequently hitting the transformer. The lower securing pin of the jib extension remained attached to the excavator quick hitch, see photo1. An exclusion zone had been set up, and no one was working under the load at any time so avoiding potential injuries.



Investigation

Investigations carried out by an independent engineer found that there were no equipment failures or defects, the excavator, quick hitch and jib extension were in good condition and did not fail mechanically.

They concluded that in all probability the hitch had partially engaged, (hitting up against the coupler, but not fully) as the jib extension was not correctly aligned. In this instance the operator engaged the quick hitch locking mechanism from the cab and his examination did not highlight any issues with the jib extension when attached.

Actions Required:

- The Operator must confirm to the person in charge of the lift that the following checks are completed, and they (person in charge of the lift) should also complete their own visual check before any lifting task begins.
    - The Operator must first confirm that the jib extension has a valid LOLER certificate and a load test certificate for the excavator and jib extension combination.
    - The Operator is responsible to carry out a full visual check at the hitch itself - not from the cab. This is to confirm that the jib extension is safe to use, secure, and correctly engaged on the quick hitch. This includes checking all fittings, welds, couplings, and any signs of leaks, damage, or wear which may affect the structural integrity of the jib extension.
    - They must also visually check that the fully automatic double lock system has fully engaged on both front and rear pins.
- The person in charge of the lift should ensure that an exclusion zone is set up and that no one on site is at risk from a lift failure.