



## **Safety Alert – 8 January 2015**

### **Near Miss – Broken Pole Strap**

A trainee line mechanic nearly fell off ladder when his pole strap snapped.

#### **What happened?**

He was working from a ladder up a pole. The ladder was correctly tied off and he was attached to the pole with a webbing pole strap.

The webbing strap suddenly snapped under his weight strain. To prevent himself from falling off the ladder, the trainee grabbed onto an overhead conductor and he was then able to descend safely.

The conductor was de-energised and the trainee was wearing full PPE, including insulating gloves

#### **Investigation findings**

##### **Immediate causes:**

- Although in test, the belt had been damaged by previous friction against concrete poles and was not capable of taking the load of the trainee

##### **Contributing causes:**

- Reliance on the in test date as an indicator of safety
- The protective covering over the strap had not been covering the strap for some time
- There was no visual inspection of the pole strap prior to use on the day

##### **Immediate Response**

- All pole straps and harnesses were recalled for immediate inspection
- Marginal straps were replaced

##### **Further Actions**

- Mandatory visual inspection of equipment before each use
- Weekly inspection by Team Leaders when vehicle inspections are done
- Visual example created of what level of wear is safe and what is marginal. If deemed marginal, a re-test is mandatory
- Bi-annual test standard re-set to be fit for use for a minimum of 6 months, not just safe on the test day
- Integrity of protective cover sheath mandatory for safety certification, not just the webbing strap