



Creosote Risk



Recently in the Earlston area of Scotland, a child came into contact with a pole that had been left along a grass verge in preparation for erecting during a shut-down some days later.

The young boy sat on the pole and got creosote on his hands. He then rubbed his hands on his face which caused irritation to his skin (creosote burns) similar to sun burn.

This is the 3rd such incident in the last couple of years where children have received creosote burns after coming into contact with poles that have been stored on grass verges or within public areas.

This Safety Express has been issued as a reminder to all EN staff and service partners the importance of ensuring all poles are stored in such a way as to minimise any health and safety risk to the public.

Recommendations:

- Work should be planned to minimise the period the poles are stored on site.
- If work is cancelled or rescheduled the poles must be collected from site and returned to a secure location.
- Poles should be stored in a safe manner and where practical away from public thoroughfares and playing areas.
- Any pole stored on a grass verge should only be there for a short time and if left unattended suitable and sufficient protection should be placed around the pole(s). (*barriers and signage*).
- In hot weather every effort should be made to store poles in shaded areas.
- If any pole is delivered to site showing signs of excessive surface creosote, return it to the Depot and inform the supplier to arrange pick up and replacement.

Further information can be found in the
Wood Pole Overhead Manual Volume 1 [OHL-16-001](#)