



Line Patrol Injury

During an overhead line patrol on 14th October 2015, an overhead line surveyor, working for one of our Service Partners, suffered a serious injury when a wooden board that had been used to cover a manhole collapsed when he stepped on it. The board was in poor condition and was completely overgrown with grass and moss. The surveyor struck his knee on the ceramic edge of the well as his leg fell into it.

The injury sustained resulted in surgery to repair the patella tendon. He is now undergoing physiotherapy and will not be able to return to work for a minimum of 8 weeks.

The well was on Forestry Commission land and was unmarked. There are a number of similar such wells across the country and staff should be vigilant whenever walking across rough terrain.

The surveyor was able to summon help by calling his colleague by mobile phone. The work party, as part of their lone working risk assessment control measures, were keeping in contact every half hour and if the injured person had not been able to call for help his absence would not have gone undetected.



Well once uncovered



The injured knee following surgery

Recommendations and action points

- All staff required to cross rough terrain to be alerted to this incident and the danger of unmarked wells.
- All managers and supervisors with staff who work alone to read “Lone Working” procedure [SMS-11-021](#) and implement requirements to protect lone workers.
- A risk assessment, whether generic or a START site specific, must identify control measures to monitor and communicate with lone workers.
- Means of communication should be considered particularly if mobile phone signal may be poor.