



Rotten Pole fell in close proximity to a team operating a mini digger.



Following work that was being undertaken to reinstate an open trench, a terminal pole with live conductors and cable attached, fell within close proximity to the working party.

The team had maintained a safe distance of 1.5 metres of unbroken ground between the excavation machine and the pole for the duration of their work.

An investigation has taken place which identified that the pole had been inspected and classified as HI-5 in August 2013. The pole was also identified during a site visit as rotten by the Project Manager and was due to be replaced as part of the Connections Project.

The investigation has also identified that the stay rod had been damaged previously.

The investigation team believe there was inadvertent contact between the mini-digger and the stay wire, which, due to the poor condition of the pole has resulted in the pole failing and falling to ground.

Recommendations:

- Where any excavation work is planned, using plant or machinery, near to or within close proximity to a wood pole or stay rod, carry out a visual inspection before starting. If you have any doubts, concerns or issues about the condition of either the pole or stay rod, **STOP** and contact your Team Leader or Supervisor.

Action: Team Leader / Supervisor

- The Health Index (HI) is used to identify the residual strength of a pole. If you / your team are not familiar with the Health Index document, please use the attached to review with your team ([QUAL-12-288](#)).