

# SIGNIFICANT ELECTRICAL SAFETY INCIDENT ADVICE



esaa  
PO Box A2492  
**Sydney South NSW 1235**  
Telephone (02) 9261-0141  
Facsimile (02) 9261-3153  
Email grant@esaa.com.au



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**Brief description of accident/incident (include voltage):**

During January 2004, two separate incidents occurred in which Network Employees climbed steel consumer carryover poles that collapsed during their ascent. Rust below ground level caused the poles to fall down.

The Network employees did not use an approved method of testing the steel poles. Their only test method was to push their ladder against the steel pole to see if there was any unusual movement. Consequently, the severity of metal rust below ground remained undetected.

**Extent of injury/damage**

One employee sustained an ankle injury and the other employee's injuries included broken ribs and spinal damage.

Both incidents could have resulted in permanent spinal injury.

**Local action taken:**

It is essential that everyone comply with approved work practices and safety procedures.

Before climbing a steel pole Network Employees must comply with all aspects of Field Instruction 3.2 Supporting Poles clause 3.2.6.2 which states the following:

- Carry out a visual inspection of the pole and its hardware.
- If practicable, dig to a depth of 400 mm and use a hammer and punch to check the steel pole integrity. If not practicable, use an approved method of supporting the pole such as a crane, temporary steels, etc.
- If rust is detected the pole must be supported.

Before commencing any task, consideration must be given to the likely consequences of not following safe work procedures and practices.

**Additional comments:**

Nil.

**FURTHER INFORMATION - CONTACT:**

**Shane Eeles**  
Technical Services  
Western Power  
phone: (08) 9441 3576 | fax: (08) 9441 3580  
email: shane.eeles@westernpower.com.au