

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENT ADVICE



Ergon Energy Corporation Limited

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INCIDENT DETAILS

A 9.5 metre cross-road service pole failed in service when a Technical Serviceperson was performing work from a ladder at the pole top.

EXTENT OF INJURY/DAMAGE

The employee sustained minor bruising to his right knee, left elbow and lower left back.

INVESTIGATION FINDINGS

- Two on-call employees were called to attend a loss of supply to a house caused by a failed fascia mounted service fuse. A new service fuse was installed at the service pole. The pole was a natural round timber pole with a short crossarm holding a house service. A covered single phase service approximately 30 metres in length was connected to the service pole across the street from the overhead mains. Two services extended approximately 10 metres from the service pole to neighbouring houses.
- A Daily/Task Workplace Health & Safety Plan was completed before commencing work at the site. Written comments on the plan included Hazards "Pole Poor Condition" and Control Measures "Ladder Test".
- A ladder test was performed at 3 levels whereby the employee bounced on the ladder at the bottom before climbing, half way up the ladder and then at the top of the ladder before tying in the the harness to carry out the work. There was no indication at this time of any problems with the pole.
- The installation of a new service fuse was completed and harness unclipped ready to descend the pole. A "crack" was heard at this point and, before the employee could descend, another crack was heard and the pole fell to the ground with the employee and ladder.
- Requirements of Standard Work Practice (SWP) SP0201 Pole Inspection for Safe Climbing requires a rope test or below ground inspection prior to climbing the pole.
- Records identify the pole was last inspected on 4/11/99, passed for service and due for inspection in September 2003.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

- The requirements of Ergon Energy's SWP SP0201 Pole Inspection for Safe Climbing to be reinforced with all applicable employees.
- A comprehensive investigation has commenced into the circumstances surrounding this incident.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Bruce Grimley, Group Manager WH&S (07) 40502818