



## Significant Electrical Safety Incident Advice

<b>DATE:</b>	<b>10 January 2003</b>
<b>DATE OF INCIDENT:</b>	<b>14 December 2002</b>
<b>NO. OF PAGES:</b>	<b>One</b>
<b>ESAA NUMBER:</b>	<b>07/2003</b>

### Brief Description of Accident/Incident and Voltage:

On Saturday 14 December at approximately 1120hrs, a two-man line crew was assigned to permanently remove a four-wire open service to a residence prior to its demolition. The LV pole on which one of the line workers was working, broke and he fell to the ground with the pole, shortly after (not immediately) the three phase four-wire service was cut away. On site investigation has shown the pole appears to have snapped about 150-200mm (6-8 inches) below the ground level.

The team had carried out and documented a hazard/risk assessment of the site prior to commencing work. This included checking the pole's last inspection date which was found to be within the relevant time scale. Inspection date was 2000 and passed for service. Both team members have stated that they had given the pole a sufficient series of ladder tests before climbing and it was also indicated that the worker who ascended the pole had checked for tightness of service prior to him cutting it away. He was satisfied that there was no weight on the service. As the pole fell, it hit the edge of a pergola and landed in a fruit tree. The pole also had a single-phase twisted service attached until the final drop. It appears certain that all these factors provided some resistance to the pole coming down harder than it did.

The pole in question was a natural round timber terminal pole without a stay with two cross-arms, being fed by open wire laterals located in the backyard of a private residence. It had an open wire service (the one to be cut away) and a twisted service to two residences. It also had a streetlight wire terminated on it (this wire used to feed to a light on the street but apparently a tree fell on the wire some time previously and it had been cut away). A local communications company had also run its optic fibre cable to the pole and it had been rolled up and left on the pole (it did not continue on) with the catenary earth going down the pole into the ground.

### Extent of Injury/Damage:

Multiple soft tissue injuries, possible long-term back and neck injuries. The incident resulted in a number of injuries to the line worker but the circumstances also highlighted the potential for more serious injuries.

### Local Action Taken:

As a preliminary precaution, all field workers have been advised that, until further notice, service removals from ALL poles shall be disconnected at the pole end, proven de-energised and then firstly lowered from the house (POA) end prior to attempting removal from the pole end. Ladder tests should be carried out both at the time of initial ascent (for de-energisation) and again before final removal of the service line from the pole end

### Further Action:

While some preliminary on site investigations were carried out on the day of the incident and subsequently, a formal investigation team has been appointed to investigate and report on the incident.

### Potential Severity:

**FATAL:** Potential to have caused death  
**HIGH:** Potential to have caused serious injury, permanent disability, ill health

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### Further Information Contact:

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