



14.04.2025

Civil Subcontractor Tip Truck

Damaging Overhead Comms Infrastructure

WHAT HAPPENED?



A transportation subcontractor engaged to transport hard fill between two sites in Newlands left the truck’s Power Take-Off (PTO) engaged post load release. PTOs allow trucks to power equipment like hydraulic lifts, pumps, or other tools, without needing a separate power source.

The driver travelled through an urban 50km area and at some point, also activated the hoist control lever in the cab enabling the tipping bin to raise in transit lifting it into overhead communications infrastructure causing damage. A small volume of fill was also spilt onto the road.

IMMEDIATE ACTION TAKEN

The truck travelled for approximately 250 metres while the tipping bin is fully up. Traffic management was deployed immediately to enable clean up on the road and ensure public safety. Transport company called out mechanic to deal with the truck hydraulics to lower the deck.

Post incident investigation commenced including on site drug test.

Key stakeholders and asset owners informed.

ROOT CAUSE

The PTO was activated after tipping a load and lowering their bin. The hoist control was later accidentally moved into the up position while driving, causing the bin to rise. Driving with the PTO engaged is not industry best practice and risks contact with overhead lines. It can also damage the vehicle.

LEARNINGS

- All drivers must pay attention to the visual indicators in vehicles – in this case an alert light in the cab indicating PTO engagement.
- While the truck made contact with the Communications Line, it could have been a live distribution or transmission line posing a high risk of contact with electricity.
- All contractors to be vigilant in ensuring staff are always fit for work.

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Incident Date	27 Feb 2025