

Wood Pole Fall Arrest System

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Hazard Summary

Climbing utility poles is part of a lineman's job and fall protection is an important safety factor when working from a pole. A common type of fall protection is a "pole choker" fall arrest system.

This type of fall arrest consists of a pole belt that adjusts to cinch the pole and attaches on to a lineman's climbing belt. Properly equipping employees and training them on correct procedures for climbing, anchoring and using the pole belt and climbing belt is extremely important and required.

Due to recent incidents with this type of fall arrest employers and employees are reminded that it is important to carefully inspect the tightening mechanism, prior to each use, to make sure it is free of any defects and is working properly. Employers and employees are also reminded it is important to make sure the user tightens the belt to the pole as per the manufacturer's instructions. Improper use of the equipment or lack of training can have serious consequences in the equipment's ability to provide protection and may result in equipment failure, falls and serious injury.

Preventive Measures

The Occupational Health and Safety Division of the Nova Scotia Department of the Environment and Labour remind employers and employees that:

- all equipment must be used as per the manufacturer's instructions
- appropriate training in the use of the equipment is required
- equipment should be checked before use
- a regular maintenance and inspection program, as suggested by the manufacturer, should be developed

Applicable Regulations

OHS Act

Employer general duty:

13 (1) Every employer shall take every precaution that is reasonable in the circumstances to:

- (a) ensure the health and safety of persons at or near the workplace;
- (b) provide and maintain equipment, machines, materials or things that are properly equipped with safety devices;
- (c) provide such information, instruction, training, supervision and facilities as are necessary to the health or safety of the employees;

(d) ensure that the employees, and particularly the supervisors and foremen, are made familiar with any health or safety hazards that may be met by them at the workplace;

(e) ensure that the employees are made familiar with the proper use of all devices, equipment and clothing required for their protection; and

(f) conduct the employer's undertaking so that employees are not exposed to health or safety hazards as a result of the undertaking

Employee precautions and duty:

17 (1) Every employee, while at work, shall

(b) co-operate with the employer and with the employee's fellow employees to protect the employee's own health and safety and that of other persons at or near the workplace;

(c) take every reasonable precaution in the circumstances to ensure that protective devices, equipment or clothing required by the employer, this Act or the regulations are used or worn;

OSGR:

Section 9(2)

Where personal protective equipment or devices are required under the Act or these regulations, an employer shall ensure that: (a) an employee receives adequate training in the proper use and care of the personal protective equipment or devices; and (b) an employee wears or uses the personal protective equipment or devices in accordance with the instruction and training provided.

Section 9(3)

An employer shall ensure that all personal protective equipment or devices required under the Act or these regulations are: (a) maintained by a competent person; and (b) tested or visually inspected before each use, in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.