



## Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members



### Inspect Wood Poles Before Climbing Safety Message

It happens every so often – and more often than it should. A lineworker climbs a wood pole and the pole falls. With the advent of 100% fall protection, the climber is assured serious injury and often death if a pole falls while they are tied to it.

Several of these types of incidents have occurred in recent months. The first question is, why didn't those poles get checked before anyone climbed them? The next question is, what can we do to prevent future falls?

#### Correct Depth is Key

First and foremost, correct depth is what keeps a pole in the air. Most companies have a specification that determines a pole's installed depth based on its length. Another resource you can refer to is ANSI O5.1, "Wood Poles – Specifications and Dimensions." Essentially, the taller a pole is, the deeper it needs to be buried in the ground to ensure it is stable. Across the industry, it is not uncommon for utilities to teach this rule of thumb: 10% of the pole height plus 2 feet.

The pole brand, often referred to as a "birthmark," includes the manufacturer's name, date of manufacture, treatment type, length and class. Other information also may be included. For poles that meet the ANSI specifications, the brands are pressed into the wood at 10 feet, 2 inches for poles 50 feet long or less, and at 14 feet, 2 inches for poles 55 feet long or more. That is usually the first indication of the relative setting depth of the pole. Keep in mind that the pole may have been set properly at installation, but the grade could have changed over time, rendering the pole too shallow today.

### Minimum Depth That Can Be Climbed Is 5 Feet