



Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members



Inspect and Test Wood Poles 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 years. ***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?***

ANSWER: INSPECT THEM

Inspection and Testing

So, what are the rules about inspecting and testing for structural stability? For wood poles and pole structures, the industry guidelines are found in Appendix D to OSHA 29 CFR 1910.269.

According to the introduction to Appendix D, "When employees are to perform work on a wood pole, it is important to determine the condition of the pole before employees climb it. The weight of the employee, the weight of equipment to be installed, and other working stresses (such as the removal or retensioning of conductors) can lead to the failure of a defective pole or a pole that is not designed to handle the additional stresses. For these reasons, it is essential that, before an employee climbs a wood pole, the employer ascertain that the pole is capable of sustaining the stresses of the work. The determination that the pole is capable of sustaining these stresses includes an inspection of the condition of the pole.