

SAFETY BULLETIN

FEB 2015

Forwarder contacts overhead power line – Dangerous occurrence



What Happened?

A forwarder was delivered to site on a low loader. The machine was unloaded out with the worksite 600m from the planned unloading/turning area marked on the worksite map. It was delivered at 7:30am in the dark. Under the glare of the machine lights the overhead power lines were not noticed. The forwarder drove off the back of the low loader then into the layby adjacent to the bed of the low loader to unload his band tracks and his fuel bowzers. While lifting off the first set of band tracks the crane of the forwarder came into contact with and snagged one of the overhead 11kv cables.

On seeing sparks a member of the work party shouted a warning to the machine operator. The operator assuming he had broken a hydraulic hose moved to look up out of the machine door, as he touched and opened the door he received two minor electric shocks, but was uninjured.

Realising the power cable was possibly snagged, the machine operator had the presence of mind to not drive the machine away, which could have broken and dragged the cable to the ground, greatly increasing the level of danger. The area was made safe and the incident was immediately reported to the network provider, who attended the scene, de-energised the line and disentangled the cable. The power cable itself was undamaged.

What can we learn?

The FWM worksite scoping visit had identified a safe machine unloading area, this had been marked on the worksite map and detailed on the documentation. Any proposed deviation to the work plan should be agreed with the FWM - there may be safety or other factors of which you are not aware. If your machine does come into contact with an overhead power line, always follow the guidance in the FISA 'Look up, Stay alive' leaflet.

