

NATF Redacted Operating Experience Report

Safety – Climbing Pole Method Causes Injury

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Topic

Climbing Pole Method Causes Injury

Description

An apprentice severely injured his right arm when he kicked out on a pole and impaled his arm on the pole-step below. He was wearing the appropriate fall-restraint equipment (FRE) at the time, and was attempting to transition over the second pole-step when the injury occurred.

Lessons Learned

- The evaluation determined that the current climbing method for transitioning over pole-steps with FRE puts the climber in a hazardous position when kick-outs occur.

Actions Taken

- An alternative method for transitioning over pole-steps will be developed and rolled out to our employees who climb wood poles.
- The new method will be incorporated into the Apprentice Climbing School.
- The rollout will incorporate measures to ensure the affected employees have a thorough understanding of the method and can demonstrate reasonable proficiency.
- Our company standards will be modified to align with our new pole-step requirement. Our overall company objective will be to reduce the number of required pole-steps in our service territory.

Extent of Condition

A bulletin was distributed to distribution managers requesting they refamiliarize their employees who climb poles with our company standard to ensure they understand when pole-steps are required. If the pole being worked on does not require pole-steps, employees are to remove them before climbing and not replace them once work is completed. If the pole being worked on requires pole-steps, the climber has the option to remove the pole-steps before climbing and replace them before leaving the worksite.