

NATF Redacted Operating Experience Report

Crane Winch Drum Unexpectedly Free-Spooled

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Topic

Crane Winch Drum Unexpectedly Free-Spooled

Description

A crane-winch drum free-spooled while a crew was transferring six phase wires and two static wires from an old 100-foot steel pole to a new 115-foot steel pole as part of an ongoing renewal project. The crew had successfully transferred four of the eight wires when the incident occurred.

The crane operator was telescoping in the boom of a 50-ton crane with a load block and a 28-inch traveler attached to the load block. While telescoping to set up for another transfer, the drum of the crane free spooled unexpectedly, causing the load block and traveler to crash into the ground from about 105 feet in the air. The crane operator's hands were off and away from the winch control when the free spooling occurred.

All crew members were working outside of the established drop zone at the time of the incident; therefore, no one was injured, and the traveler was the only property damage that occurred.

Lessons Learned

Establishing and maintaining a clear drop zone when performing operations aloft is critical for the safety of crew members.

Actions Taken

1. The 50-ton crane was immediately red tagged and removed from service.
2. The crane was sent to the manufacturer for a complete analysis. No known cause has been received at this time.
3. All similar versions of this crane on the footprint were mechanically inspected for flaws and placed through a dry-run operation conducted in a controlled manner.
4. An incident report was created and reviewed by all employees working on the property.

Extent of Condition

Six other identical 50-ton cranes are in use on our footprint.