



## DAMAGE TO TELEPHONE LINES AND POLES

### Background

There have been three accidents recently resulting in damage to telephone lines; two of which involved machines loaded on low loaders. While nobody was injured as a result of these accidents damage was caused to cables and in one instance a number of poles were broken.

### What Happened

1. Telephone line located along a public road at the entrance to a Coillte site had sagged. The sun was in the drivers eyes and he didn't see the low hanging telecom wire until it was too late. The wire was pulled down by the machine on the low loader.
2. Telephone line pole along public road was broken by a lorry.
3. Low loader delivering a forwarder to a Coillte site caught sagging telephone line. The line diagonally crossed a public road on a designated timber haulage route. The driver had driven under these lines delivering a forwarder a week earlier and passed safely. Recent snow storm damage had lowered the line clearance.

### Findings

1. Low loader drivers may not have been aware of the presence of or the clearance heights of these telephone lines.
2. Telephone lines had sagged and lost their height in two of these incidents.
3. Build up of heavy snow behind telephone line poles may have pushed the poles forward causing the lines to lose height.

### Corrective Action

- The presence of telephone lines at forest entrances and on designated haulage routes must be considered by the Forestry Work Manager at timber harvesting planning stage and noted on the outline risk assessment.
- Where lines appear too low at forest entrance or along designated haulage route contact the telephone company to carry out remedial works.
- Drivers of lowloaders and other haulage vehicles need to be aware of the presence of telephone lines along their transport route and consider these lines in their risk assessments.

### Learning Points

- Drivers of lowloaders and other haulage vehicles need to be aware of the presence of overhead lines along their transport route.
- Timber harvesting contractors and sub contractors who may be delivering harvesting machines or excavators to sites must be aware of the presence of telephone lines and include them in their risk assessments.
- All contractors and sub contractors who observe telephone lines that have recently lost their clearance heights must report this to the Forestry Work Manager.

Please Don't Walk By



**Ensure this Safety Alert is brought to the attention of all employees and sub-contractors.**