

Safety Alert

Number 32

3rd September 2019



CONTACT WITH OVERHEAD ELECTRICITY LINE

Background

A Forwarder made contact with an overhead electricity line on a harvesting site. Fortunately the driver wasn't injured. The line was not pulled down or broken as a result of the contact. Minor damage was caused to the line resulting in a power outage.

What Happened

- Contact with the powerline took place at a designated crossing point
- The forwarder was travelling unloaded under the line at the time of the accident
- The driver stopped as he drove under the powerline. He raised the crane while stopped under the powerline to grab some brash to fix rutting in the area
- Contact with the powerline was made when the crane was raised
- The powerline did not break but was damaged causing a power cut locally
- The driver lowered the crane and drove away from the area following the accident

Findings

- A designated crossing point under the powerline with goalposts was in place
- The driver stopped as he drove under the powerline. This is not permitted under *IFSG 804 Guidelines, Electricity at Work: Forestry*
- The driver raised his crane while stopped under the powerline to grab some brash as rutting was taking place. Raising the boom of a machine while traveling under a powerline is not permitted under *IFSG 804 Guidelines Electricity at Work: Forestry*
- This accident was not reported to the ESB or Coillte management
- Coillte became aware of what happened when the ESB contacted them shortly after the incident occurred

Corrective Action

- Highlight the procedures for operating machines near energised powerlines to all staff, contractors and customers working on Coillte sites.
- Safety alert communicated to all staff, contractors and customers outlining the circumstances of this accident and lessons learned
- All staff, contractors, subcontractors and customer representatives who manage, supervise or carry out work on harvesting sites must familiarise themselves with the Guidelines set out in [Electricity at Work: Forestry - IFSG 804](#)
- A separate communication will deal with the task of replenishing brash underneath goalposts erected at designated crossing points.

Learning Points

- Never stop while driving any type of machine under powerlines
- Never raise the boom while driving under a powerline
- Ensure goalposts erected at designated crossing points are the correct height in accordance with **IFSG 804 Guidelines Electricity at Work: Forestry**
- Goalposts must be no higher than **4.2 metres** on Forest sites
- Goalposts on Forest roads may be erected to **4.9 metres** provided the powerline has at least **6.0 metres** clearance above the road
- Select machinery that can pass safely under goalposts on sites where powerlines are present
- Always report any powerline incident immediately to ESB Networks at **[1850 372 999](tel:1850372999)** and to Coillte management

Please Don't Walk By



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