

NATF Redacted Operating Experience Report

Safety – Lowering Material Injury

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Topic

Lowering Material Injury

Description

A pole band (a metal material weighing approximately 15 lbs.) fell from approximately 20 feet and struck an apprentice lineman on the back of the head.

A crew had completed work for the day and was removing grounds from the pole. The crew had the three sets of grounds in the bucket and placed the pole band in a cutter bag hanging on the outside of the bucket as a means to get it and the other material to the ground (see figure 1 for an example). Simultaneously, the apprentice lineman was coiling up the grounds beginning with the ground rod. As the linemen descended, the apprentice lineman moved underneath the bucket. When the pole band fell, the apprentice linemen was in its direct path. The apprentice lineman was wearing a hard hat, but still sustained an injury; he was able to return to work within two weeks.



Figure 1. Example of how the pole band was placed

Lessons Learned

1. Secure materials before raising or lowering the bucket.
2. Get confirmation from overhead workers before entering the area underneath overhead work.
3. Do not go into the area underneath overhead work unless necessary; ask yourself if the task can be done at a later time.

Actions Taken

- Communicating management's expectation through crew meetings, tailboards, and internal media.
- Following up using the safety observation program on actual behavior in the field.
- Memorializing the communication expectation in our Accident Prevention Manual.

Extent of Condition

Any employee working on the ground while employees are in an elevated position are at risk. However, some employees, such as groundmen and apprentices, are in that position more often than others. The corrective action focuses on this population.