

POLE HOLES



This alert has been generated to ensure that all sites in Victoria are aware of the risks associated with falls around holes utilised within the power supply industry.

Employers have a duty to ensure their workplace is safe, and this means controlling the risk of falls from any height. The Victorian Occupational Health & Safety 2004 under section 21 states that;

An employer must, so far as is reasonably practicable, provide and maintain for of the employer a working environment that is safe and without risks to health.

The Occupational Health & Safety Regulations 2007 identifies that when working in close proximity to an unprotected edge or in close proximity to a hole, shaft or pit that is of sufficient dimensions to allow a person to fall; extra precautions are required to ensure that safe means of access/egress can be achieved.

Due to the inherent risks associated with the design of many holes used for pole erection,

the employer must eliminate the risk of falling into the hole. The ETU is of the opinion that all works associated with the pole erection be thoroughly documented by way of individual SWMS, to control the risks of all operational activities.

The employer must control the risk using the following measures in order of priority:

- use a fixed barrier to prevent falls into hole. (See attached Worksafe guidance)
- use a passive fall prevention device.
- use a work positioning system to ensure employees work within a safe area
- install a fall arrest system to limit the risk of injuries in the event of a fall

It is the recommendation of The ETU that if any of the above steps are not followed the work **should cease**. Contact your designated Health & Safety Representative, your local organiser or alternatively your Union OH&S Officer.