



Injury to Overhead Line Surveyor



A UK based Network Operator has recently reported a serious injury sustained by an overhead line surveyor while carrying out a line patrol. A wooden board that had been used to cover a well opening collapsed when the surveyor stepped on it. The board was in poor condition and was completely overgrown by grass and moss.

The injury sustained resulted in surgery to repair the patella tendon. The surveyor is now undergoing physiotherapy and will not be able to return to work for a minimum of 8 weeks. The well was on Forestry Commission land and was unmarked.

The surveyor was able to summon help by calling his colleague by mobile phone. The work party, as part of their lone working risk assessment control measures, were keeping in contact every half hour, and if the injured person had not been able to call for help his absence would not have gone undetected.

Recommendations – as suggested by the investigation report

1. All staff required to cross rough terrain to be alerted to this incident and the danger of unmarked wells.
2. A risk assessment, either generic or site specific, must identify control measures to monitor and communicate with lone workers.
3. Means of communication should be carefully considered particularly if mobile phone signal may be poor.
4. Landowners must be made aware of their obligations regarding hazards on their property.

Issue date	4 th December 2015	Ref. No	UAG035
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