

# Safety and health alert

## 17/95 Lineworker falls from power pole

### Incident

A lineworker fell 9.5 metres from a ladder at the top of a pole in Lathlain during May 1995.

The lineworker, wearing a linebelt with a pole strap, was repositioning a cross arm and leant forward to remove a nut from a bolt. When the lineworker leant back the pole strap safety catch deatched from his linebelt, and he fell 9.5 metres to the ground. The lineworker was seriously injured, and could easily have been killed.

### Factors

It seems likely that a pocket knife attached to the lineworker's linebelt caught in the pole strap safety catch as he clipped it onto the linebelt "D" attachment, jamming the safety catch partially open. When the lineworker leant back, the tension on the pole strap caused the partially opened safety catch to detach from the "D" attachment. The pole strap came off the pole and the lineworker fell to the ground.

Other possible causes may have been:

- the spring of the safety catch failed to self close;
- a carpenters' tool belt worn over the linebelt caught in the safety catch; and
- a piece of loose clothing jammed in the safety catch.

### Recommendations

Employers of lineworkers should ensure awareness of these hazards in training programs and induction programs for the correct use and application of linebelts and pole straps.

Karabiners or double action safety catches should be used. Double action safety catches must connect to the correct "D" attachments.

Inspect linebelts, pole straps and other safety equipment regularly, and at least daily when in use.

Review tools attached to the linebelt, or carried around the waist. Ensure that they cannot become entangled in the safety catch.

### Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the WorkSafe internet site [www.worksafe.wa.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au), or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email: [safety@docep.wa.gov.au](mailto:safety@docep.wa.gov.au).

