

MANUFACTURING SAFETY ALERT

Ask Yourself
“Could it happen here?”

DESCRIPTION OF EVENT

Electrical Pole Fire

A site tenant reported a fire at the top of an electrical pole. Both BC Hydro and the fire department were notified.

Hydro crews were unable to disconnect the main switch at the site as it was privately owned and without the power isolation confirmed, fire crews could not respond.

A high-voltage contractor was then called to the site and deactivated the 25kV isolation switch enabling the fire department to proceed with extinguishing the fire.

The discovery of nesting material suggests it may have been the cause of the fire.



SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- Conduct regular inspections of overhead power distribution networks to identify potential hazards.
- Clear away vegetation near and around power poles and remove trees at risk of falling. Inspect poles for deterioration every five years to prevent collapse.
- Install dedicated poles 2m higher than surrounding ones equipped with platforms for nesting birds. And/or use spike mats and angled deflectors on the cross arms to deter birds from building nests.

MOST IMPORTANT TAKE AWAY

In the event of a fire or equipment malfunction involving high-voltage systems, following proper shutdown procedures is critical for safety.

ERP's need to include contacts for high-voltage contractors and training should be provided for all employees tasked with operating ground-operated pole-top switches.

