

Wildlife and cattle impact on electric poles



Problem

Eskom has recorded a number of incidents where livestock or game is causing damage to electrical infrastructure.

The animals involved in incidents are mostly horses, cattle and buffalo. Rhinos and elephants are also known to have a significant impact on wooden distribution poles as they use them as territorial markers and rubbing posts.

Damage

The animals rub against the wooden poles or steel structures or even the stay wires that keep the structures upright. After some time the following could occur:

- The rubbing against the wooden poles erodes the outer layer of creosote used to protect the pole, allowing termites and other insects to enter the pole, making it brittle.
- The pole could break or lean over, causing the live electric wires to sag to the ground. The live



wires are then within touching distance and could kill or seriously injure animals or people.

- If the animal uses the stays as a rubbing post, it creates movement of the pole top. This can loosen up the stays, bonding and hardware to the point where the live wires at the top could flash over, causing a veld fire.. .

The solution

Eskom needs to be advised of areas where game such as rhino, elephants, giraffe and buffalos are introduced to ensure that the powerlines are evaluated in terms of the risks they pose to such species and to ensure the safety of the people on the farm, Eskom staff and contractors.

Farmers or game farm owners should constantly check all the poles on their properties for signs of rubbing.

Often the piling of rocks around the pole base or stay wires deter the animals from going near the poles or stay wires.

Please report any damaged poles to Eskom immediately to prevent further damage caused by fallen poles or dropped wires.

Call: 08600 37566 (ESKOM)