

# Pre-climb check assessment

What do I need to know to begin the "PRE-CLIMB" check?  
 Check the year of preservation, supplier marking and test year on the pole.  
 Follow the traffic light in step order to identify the correct assessment for your pole.

The Pole Climbing Traffic Light  
 Follow the steps in order to determine the correct pole testing details

STEP 1	Check the poles 3 metre mark Is the pole marked 2i and dated 98? If NO - go to Step 2 If YES - check the Pole Test label Has the pole been tested since Nov-2016?	YES	POLE TESTED SINCE Nov 2016 PROCEED WITH PRE-CLIMB CHECK
		NO	POLE TESTED BEFORE NOV 2016 These poles are sterile and can only be worked on from a hoist provided they pass a preclimb check. (Helpdesk - 0330 1233304 Option 1)
STEP 2	Continue to check the 3 metre mark:- Any pole marked 5i or 6i or AC? OR 1i Poles dated 90 to 96? OR any poles dated 88 or 89? If NO - go to Step 3 If YES - check Pole test label. Has the pole been tested in the last <u>6</u> years?	YES	POLE TEST DATE WITHIN 6 YEARS PROCEED WITH PRE-CLIMB CHECK
		NO	POLE TEST DATE over 6 YEARS These poles are sterile and can only be worked on from a hoist provided they pass a preclimb check. (Helpdesk - 0330 1233304 Option 1)
STEP 3	Is the pole over 53 years old? If NO go to Step 4 If YES, check Pole test label. Has the pole been tested in the in last <u>6</u> years?	YES	POLE TEST DATE WITHIN 6 YEARS PROCEED WITH PRE-CLIMB CHECK
		NO	POLE TEST DATE over 6 YEARS These poles are sterile and can only be worked on from a hoist provided they pass a pre-climb check. (Helpdesk - 0330 1233304 Option 1)
STEP 4	Is the pole aged 17 to 53 years old? If NO Proceed to Pre Climb Check If YES, check Pole test label. Has the pole been tested in the last <u>12</u> years?	YES	POLE TEST DATE WITHIN 12 YEARS PROCEED WITH PRECLIMB CHECK
		NO	POLE TEST DATE over 12 YEARS These poles are sterile and can only be worked on from a hoist provided they pass a preclimb check. (Helpdesk - 0330 1233304 Option 1)
Pre climb Check	Is the pole aged up to 17 years? and <u>NOT</u> identified in Step 2	YES	Proceed with pre-climb checks (Note these poles are not required to have a pole test label attached)

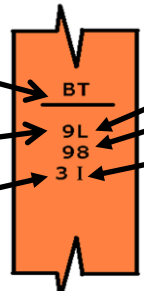
If you are in any doubt, **DO NOT CLIMB THE POLE** – For all the Pole Test issues or questions.  
 Call the Helpdesk **0330 1233304 Option 1** or e-mail them to [poletesthelpdesk@openreach.co.uk](mailto:poletesthelpdesk@openreach.co.uk)

**3m mark**  
On earlier poles, the top of the letters BT, PO or GPO represented the 3m point. Or, it could be identified by an aluminium label today.

**Pole length in metres**  
(9, 10, 11 etc)

**Supplier Markings**  
1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6

Note – Not on pre 1990 poles




**Class of pole**  
Light, Medium or Stout

**Year of preservation**  
(1998)

**Type of wood**  
E.g. I – Imported

**AC 500's**

**Examples of markings**



## Reading the Pole Test Label (A558):

**Top line** – Indicates the **Month** of the pole test. **Second Line** – Indicates the **Year** of the pole test.  
**Bottom row of letters** -These indicate the identity of the pole tester who performed the test (their ID)



OR



This example shows a test date of **7 (July), 2008** This example shows a test date of **5 (May), 2015**

**RED labels – Are only seen with the RED 'D' or 'SD' label - THESE POLES SHOULD NOT BE CLIMBED**

A 'preclimb' check must be completed before **ANY** task is undertaken on a pole this includes working from a Hoist where a pole is deemed sterile or is a D pole.

On your preclimb check – don't just rely on your visual check, you must ALWAYS do a hammer test.

**Hammer Test** - Tap the pole lightly with a 1lb Hammer – the type of sound you get will indicate the condition of the pole around the point struck.

- **GOOD TIMBER** gives you a sharp, metallic ring.
- **INTERNAL OR SURFACE DECAY** gives you a dull sound.

**Reference taps** – You should make reference taps 600 - 900mm up the pole to compare the response you get with those at ground level.

**Prodding Test** - This test should only be applied to those parts of the pole where decay is visible, suspected or where your hammer test has indicated that external decay may be present.

**To do the test**, prod the surface of the pole lightly with your probe.

Wood in good condition will resist penetration and will grip the point of your probe.

Decayed wood will offer little or no resistance to penetration and will not grip the point.

### Rules for working on BT D-poles *EPT/OHP/C031*

#### NEVER

- Access the pole from a ladder – (these poles can **ONLY** be accessed by MEWP, scaffold or access tower)
- Start work in proximity to a D pole if you think it is in imminent danger of collapse.
- Add or remove aerial cables. (Unless the pole is being renewed and has been supported by other means)
- Replace/remove any cable that appears to be providing support to the pole.

#### ALWAYS

- Carry out a full assessment of risk.
- Be careful not to jar or strike the pole with a platform.
- Refer to documentation or your line manager if you are unsure as to what action you can/cannot perform.

New dropwires may only be added to 'D' poles, provided they meet the criteria below :

- The pole is not classified as PIDOC (Pole in Imminent Danger of Collapse)
- The pole is not classified as a 'D' pole due to INTERNAL or EXTERNAL DECAY (see A75)
- The pole does not have an unbalanced load
- When added, additional wires do not exceed 75% of the maximum load of the pole

### Preclimb Checks

A reminder of some of the important checks you need to make before you start to climb the pole.

- Check wire/cable heights -where they cross the road (if less than 5.2m - don't climb the pole)
- Pole depth
- Hammer test
- Pole damage, cuts & scuffs or excessive lean
- The vicinity of any power lines (Joint User Pole, LV or HV)
- Hazards that are within 1m
- Attachments that may restrict or impede climbing
- In all instances fix your pre-climb check label to the base of the pole before climbing (where a Hoist is used clearly mark 'Hoist' along with your details)
- Check steps visually and physically for any weakness or movement before you put weight on them