

Poles - Pre-climb or Pre-Work checks

What do I need to start the "PRE-CLIMB" or "PRE-WORK" check?

Here is your guide to completing the checks. You may use the decision table overleaf or the Pole Calculator – Recommended (Openreach iPhone tool box) to check if the pole is within test date

Gathering the pole information



1. Locate the 3M mark or the owner ID
Measure the depth to the line or on older poles the depth is measured to the top of the owners ID
2. Use the year of the pole = E.G. 2003 or 1950
to calculate the **AGE** of the pole
3. Record the Species of the pole if it is provided
For example "AC" or "Z" or "I" or "IS"
4. Record the Depot if provided



5. Locate the Pole Test label if present – poles 17 years old and under may not require a label.
Use the date of the last test to calculate if the pole is within its test date or it is sterile.

The Pole Test Labels (A558) and Identifying D Labels

Top line - Indicates the **Month** of the pole test. **Second Line** - Indicates the **Year** of the pole test.

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

OR

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

OR

RED labels – Denote 'D' or 'SD'
Poles - DO NOT CLIMB



6. Using the iPhone calculator or decision table check if the pole is within test date before continuing

Poles are tested at different times and frequencies use the information taken from the pole and complete the MANDATORY PRE-CLIMB or PRE-WORK check to decide if the pole is, OK, D or STERILE

"D" or Defective - these poles are only accessible by a hoist
following a Risk Assessment - see "Working on D poles"
ISIS [EPT/OHP/C031](#) summarised overleaf

**WARNING DO NOT CLIMB DEFECTIVE
POLES**

STERILE poles do not have a current in date test record but will
pass the physical checks of the PRE-CLIMB or PRE-WORK check

WARNING STERILE POLES
Can only be accessed using a HOIST

You have doubts the pole has passed the PRE-CLIMB or
PRE-WORK check or that the pole is within its test date

Unsure or you suspect the pole is unsafe
SEEK ADVICE but DO NOT CLIMB

OK poles have a current in date test or do not yet require a
label and will pass the PRE-CLIMB or PRE-WORK check

OK the pole passes a PRE-CLIMB check
CLIMBING is PERMITTED

Pre-climb Check Reminder

Important checks you need to make before you start to climb or work on a pole.

- Check the pole is within its periodic test date – steps 1 to 6 above
- Check wire/cable heights –for relevant clearances
- Pole depth
- Hammer test - A summary of the process is provided overleaf
- Pole damage, cuts & scuffs or excessive lean
- The vicinity of any power lines (Joint User Pole, LV or HV)
- Hazards that are within 1m or attachments that may restrict or impede climbing
- Always fix your pre-climb label between 75-100mm of the base of the pole before climbing
- Where a Hoist is to be used clearly mark 'Hoist' along with your details on the pre-climb label
- If decay suspected it must be investigated especially around the steps and at the top of the pole
- Don't forget to check steps visually and physically for any weakness or movement before you put weight on them

If you are in any doubt, **DO NOT CLIMB THE POLE** – For all the Pole Test issues or questions call - Pole Test Control **0330 1233304 Option 1** - or if you are working in Northern Ireland call 0800 917 0287

The Pole Climbing Traffic Light

Using the Pole and Testing details follow the steps in order to determine how you are able to proceed - For Joint User poles not owned by BT refer to [EPT/OHP/C032](#)

STEP 1	Poles marked 2i and dated 1998? If NO - go to Step 2 If YES - check the Pole Test label Is the test within the last <u>6 years</u> ?	YES	POLE TEST DATE WITHIN 6 YEARS PROCEED WITH PRE-CLIMB CHECK
		NO	POLE TEST DATE over 6 YEARS The pole is sterile –can only be accessed with a HOIST
STEP 2	Any pole marked 4i or 5i or 6i? OR any poles dated 88 or 89? OR 1i Poles dated 90 to 96? Or any pole marked species AC or Z? If NO - go to Step 3 If YES -check Pole test label. Is the test within the last 6 years?	YES	POLE TEST DATE WITHIN 6 YEARS PROCEED WITH PRE-CLIMB CHECK
		NO	POLE TEST DATE over 6 YEARS The pole is sterile –can only be accessed with a HOIST
STEP 3	Is the pole 54 years old or over? If NO - go to Step 4 If YES, check Pole test label. Is the test within the last <u>6 years</u> ?	YES	POLE TEST DATE WITHIN 6 YEARS PROCEED WITH PRE-CLIMB CHECK
		NO	POLE TEST DATE over 6 YEARS The pole is sterile –can only be accessed with a HOIST
STEP 4	Is the pole aged 18 to 53 years old? If NO Proceed to S' 5 If YES, check Pole test label. Is the test within the last <u>12 years</u> ?	YES	POLE TEST DATE WITHIN 12 YEARS PROCEED WITH PRE-CLIMB CHECK
		NO	POLE TEST DATE over 12 YEARS The pole is sterile –can only be accessed with a HOIST
STEP 5	Is the pole age less than 18 years? and <u>NOT</u> identified in Step 1 or 2	YES	PROCEED WITH PRE-CLIMB CHECK (A pole test label is not required)

All poles that are CLIMBED or WORKED on are required to PASS the PRE-CLIMB or PRE-WORK check.

Any pole that is to be WORKED on including using a hoist is required to have a pre-work assessment and a MANDATORY hammer test as part of the pre-work for Sterile or D pole risk assessment.

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 is not classified as 'D' due to damage
- The pole does not have an unbalanced load
- When added, additional wires do not exceed 75% of the maximum load of the pole

THE MANDATORY PRE-CLIMB HAMMER TEST

Pre-climb 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.