

WOOD POLE FALL PROTECTION



has not been adequately addressed by the industry according to a recent tailgate discussion with Dale Scurr, a lineman by

trade with many years of climbing experience. "Where the heck is the Wood Pole Fall Protection?" he asked. "Professional Linemen keep the lights on by climbing wood poles and structures to repair the conductors and equipment. I am sick and tired... [of]... articles that are titled Fall Protection yet address everything but wood!!! Why?"

"Perhaps," he continued, "the problem is a result of how a lineman's work has evolved. There is little guidance from safety regulations to address Wood Pole Fall Protection. Since the beginning of line work, and long before OSHA wrote the book on workplace safety requirements, people were climbing poles using hooks, belt, & pole strap - the basic tools of the trade for performing line work on wood. As a Lineman, Safety Professional and Supervisor, my goal is to have my workers and me able and available for work everyday. The best way to attain this goal is to provide the safest work environment possible and one way to ensure safety is to climb fall protected on wood poles from the ground, to the point of work, and back to the ground. There are devices on the market to keep you from falling to the ground in the event of user error, fatigue, 'struck-by', electrocution, wood rot or other unfavorable wood pole conditions. Some are not practical for everyday use; they're hard to use or not easy to adjust.

One particular device that is both safe and easy to use is the BuckSqueeze manufactured by Buckingham Manufacturing Co. Inc. of Binghamton, NY. I've aided in the development, deployment and training of the BuckSqueeze.

This product came about because a lineman fell from a 95 foot pole during the ice storm of 1998. The company put twelve experienced climbers in a room and asked us to come up with something that would prevent this from happening again! Guided by the principles of safety first and ease of use second the group helped to develop the BuckSqueeze. The principle of the belt is quite simple: a fall is minimized by



the belt's cinching action around the pole. When adjusted properly the BuckSqueeze limits the user to a fall of just a few inches. It is an enhanced work positioning device that, if used properly, will prevent a fall off the pole.

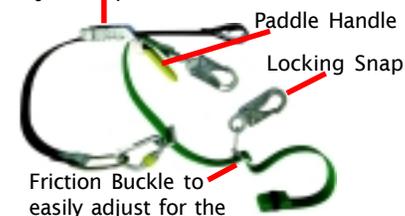
Frequently the most vocal opponents of Wood Pole Fall Protection Systems are the linemen themselves. Line workers developed sense of competence is a result of their extensive training. Resistance then, to changes in their established work processes, is human nature. But let me assure you, anyone who's cut out from a rotted pole or fallen due to any number of potential hazards knows that all the experience in the world may not prevent you from falling off the pole or riding it to the ground. The bottom line is the BuckSqueeze stops a fall and it doesn't interfere with the way you work. That means you get to go home at the end of the day the way you came in to work.

Go home healthy or go home hurt - the choice is yours!"

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Dale Scurr is a retired Army Command Sergeant Major and a retired National Grid T&D Lineman, Supervisor & Safety Specialist with over 30 years of experience. Currently Dale is a consultant to the industry.

BUCKSQUEEZE MODEL 483D

CAM Buckle used to adjust for pole diameter.



Friction Buckle to easily adjust for the distance from pole.

- Wood pole fall protection during ascent and descent.
- Fall protection while climbing over obstacles.
- Ease of adjustment for the distance from the pole.
- Ease of adjustment for the diameter of the pole while ascending or descending.
- Rollers on the paddle tensioner and carabiner dee piece provide superior lateral movement.
- Brings a User into Compliance with OSHA 1910.269 (g)(2)(v) Requirements.
- The BuckTooth, Model 485, is an accessory that must be installed when climbing iced poles.



Danny Bost, Lead Craft & Technical Trainer at Progress Energy's Lineman Training Center states that "with the implementation of the BuckSqueeze at Progress Energy, the way we climb poles has changed forever.

Due to accidents, and the severity of those accidents associated with falling from poles while free climbing, Progress Energy looked for other alternatives to free climbing. Our company looked at several different products on the market and decided the BuckSqueeze was the way to go.

With a culture change of this magnitude, implementation has been a roller coaster ride. It has been hard for some to adjust to the idea of not being able to free climb any more. Now that we are four months into implementation, we are finding that the more the line personnel use the belt, the better climbers they become with it and the easier the belt is to use. I think the biggest advantage is knowing that as a company we are doing the right thing by implementing a piece of equipment that, if used properly, will not allow another employee to free fall from a pole.

With Buckingham's help we have continued to work with the BuckSqueeze to be able to use it to its full potential. In a short period of time, I think we will see other large utilities use this advanced technology to make pole climbing much safer than it is today."