

Construction News - Engineering

Changes to Timber Poles Technical Specification

- > After consultation with our contracted pole suppliers and Forestry Corporation of NSW (FCNSW), the specification for timber poles has been updated.
- > Essential Energy auditors and Accredited Service Providers (ASPs) need to use the guidance in this Construction News to ensure compliant poles are used on our network.
- > Essential Energy expects its current contracted suppliers will transition to the new requirements in the near future. However, a transition period of three months will apply for existing supply after which poles shall be assessed against the updated specification.

Background

Essential Energy has updated our timber pole specification to ensure better compliance against Australian Standards and provide quality supply of poles whilst not impacting the supply volumes. The specification has been published after consultation with our contracted pole suppliers and FCNSW.

Updates to the specification

The major updates to the specification include:

- > Critical zone: 1500mm¹ above and 800mm below the ground line for poles up to 15.5m. No knots are permitted in the critical zone.
- > Pole top unsound knot free zone: No unsound knots are permitted in the zone between the pole top to 2m from the pole top (sound knots are permitted). This aligns with the requirements of AS 3818.1 for stayed poles as we do not know upfront which of our poles are stayed after supply.
- > Depth of cleared unsound knots: The depth of a cleared unsound knot shall be no more than the minimum of 5% of the pole circumference at the knot location or 75mm. Unsound knots shall be cleared for drainage so that no water can pool in the knot.
- > Barrel checks: Shall not extend into the heartwood of the pole. This is different from the previous requirement of 10mm depth for Durability 1 and 15mm depth for Durability 2 poles.
- > Mechanical damage:
 - Axe marks - Parallel with the grain – depth not exceeding 10mm and not more than 2 marks in a longitudinal alignment with less than 50mm between the ends of each mark along the pole.
 - Other mechanical damage – 1000mm above and 600mm below the ground line – maximum depth of 3mm and maximum cumulative circumference in any 600mm length of no more than 10% of the pole circumference.



¹ This value is 2500mm for 17m poles and above.

What do you need to do?

A transition period of three months will apply for existing pole supply. After this period the poles shall be assessed against the updated specification. Poles compliant with the previous specification shall be used urgently to eliminate risk of not being able to be used once the transition period expires.

Non-conforming poles may be rejected and need to be replaced.

The timber pole specification CEOS5124.31 can be made available on request.

Work Practice Tip



Inspect poles prior to use to ensure compliant poles are installed on the network.



More information is available on [Standards Online](#). If you have any questions, please contact: Wayne Johnson on 02 6588 6784 or Deepak Pais on 02 6588 6783.