



# *Safety* **ALERT!**

## **Immediate Danger Involving Concrete Poles**

Updated April 18, 2011

It has come to the attention of the Telecommunications Workers Union (TWU) that BC Hydro has advised Telus that no work should be done on any concrete poles, or poles adjacent to concrete poles including drop work and terminal or splicing work, anywhere in British Columbia until the hardware has been inspected and signed off by BC Hydro, or the pole has been replaced. BC Hydro is not allowing their own employees to work on non-inspected/changed out concrete poles even in the case of an outage.

Concrete poles have been found to experience damage to the bolts when a system fault occurs due to insulator failure or fallen tree/branch contacting both the conductor and the pole. The fault current may travel through the hardware (bolts) to the concrete pole reinforcing steel to ground. Because of the high impedance between the bolt and the reinforcing steel, the initial fault current might not be high enough to trip the protection. Arching between the bolt and the pole may cause damage to the bolt and cause hardware to fall from the pole.

Telus Safety will be issuing a bulletin with more information, but in the meantime, no TWU members, including Telus Build and Installation crews and Shaw, members should work on or next to concrete poles unless they are identified as safe. This will impact build, installation and maintenance work where concrete poles are involved. Until you know for sure, assume it is unsafe to do any work on concrete poles.