

Incident Detail

- Whilst preparing to drill a bore hole located on a slope adjacent to a high voltage transmission line pylon, with a T305 Commachio tracked drill rig, the rear right out-rigger appeared to shake, and then slip off its wooden chock and into a small hole which had opened up below it resulting in the rig suddenly falling onto its side.
- Fortunately the only crew in the area at the time was the Lead Driller, who noticed that something was wrong and evacuated the area before the rig fully toppled over.
- Upon subsequent examination it then became clear that the hole which the out-rigger had fallen into was caused by an unseen tree route under the out-rigger which had moved and splayed outwards when the full weight of the rig was placed onto it.
- The situation with the out-rigger seems to have been exacerbated by the use of one long wooden chock, which meant that both rear outriggers were on the same piece of wood instead of independent chocks, although it is not clear whether this would have prevented this incident.





Outcomes

- Drilling crews should make themselves aware of the site conditions and potential hazards before setting up to drill. Particular attention should be given to the ground condition and its suitability to support a drilling rig.
- Along with the usual check for underground services a thorough visual inspection of the ground should be undertaken at each drilling location, and the surrounding area, prior to setting up the rig.
- Obvious features which could destabilise the rig during drilling or set up should be avoided. This could include a soft area in otherwise firm ground or feature that could move or flex when a load is applied.
- If there is any doubt about the suitability of out-rigger locations the ground should be tested for integrity prior to setting up the rig. If there is still uncertainty regarding the stability of the drilling rig the issue should be referred to back to the drilling supervisor.
- The out-riggers should be carefully monitored as the as the load is brought to bear.