

Spotter's Guide to Pylons- Building Towers

Issue 10



Let's look at how pylons are built, repaired and eventually dismantled.

We are very fortunate to have some photos of a tower in New Zealand being built, with the base assembled first and the other parts dropped in by helicopter.

It's necessary for a team of men to climb the structure in order to secure each part in place. Then the wires are added and tensioned.



Similarly, if maintenance is needed, a gang of men are required to ascend and make the necessary changes, as is shown in the top photo on the right, where a crossbar is being removed. The tower was being reconfigured to hold a higher voltage, which requires larger arms and longer conductor strings to give the appropriate spacing between power lines for safety.



It is also possible for a gantry to be suspended below the line being worked on, to provide access, as pictured.

Sometimes, line checks are performed from the air - for this reason pylons bear name plates near the top for easy reading, as well as those seen just above your head from the ground.



When a tower is destroyed, it is much easier to remove it than it was to erect it in the first place. For example, the pylon in the third photo was damaged by a factory fire, and simply craned away.

There are no obvious things to look out for on your journey, as it's quite unusual to see a pylon being built or repaired, unless there has recently been damage e.g. from a storm.



You can watch for repairs being made, and by following planning decisions made by your local council you can sometimes find out when pylons are going to be built or deconstructed.



For example, the pylons shown at the bottom photo, in Purfleet, were in the process of having their wires removed before being dismantled, sitting in the middle of a building site.