

Watch it!

Safety advice brought to you by Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Distribution (SSEN Distribution)

These notes are intended to help all those who have to work in the vicinity of electrical apparatus. Employers have a legal obligation to ensure that their operatives are fully instructed in the correct procedures.

The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 impose health and safety requirements upon employers, employees and self-employed persons with respect to electricity at work. The regulations impose restrictions on persons being engaged in work activities on or near live conductors.

Regulation 14 requires that: "No person shall be engaged in any work activity on or near any live conductor (other than one suitably covered with insulating material so as to prevent danger) that danger may arise unless:

- ◆ it is **unreasonable** in all circumstances for it to be dead; and
- ◆ it is **reasonable** in all circumstances for him to be at work on or near it while it is live; and
- ◆ suitable precautions (including where necessary the provision of suitable protective equipment) are taken to prevent injury."

The purpose of the regulations is to require precautions to be taken against the risk of death or personal injury from electricity in work activities.

Publications

The Health and Safety Executive have produced a document entitled 'Avoiding Danger from Underground Services', and the Appendix 1 deals specifically with electric cables. Copies are available from the HSE's Accredited Agents and good booksellers, Ref. HS (G) 47.

Copies of Health and Safety Guidance note GS 6 relating to safe working in proximity to overhead lines, are available from the Health and Safety Executive's website - www.hse.gov.uk.

Note

In situations of emergency or danger, or where the advice contained in these notes cannot be followed, you must consult SSEN Distribution immediately. Tel. 0800 0727282 for southern England or 0800 300999 for Scotland.

Additional copies of these "Watch it!" leaflets can be obtained from our Asset Data Team office upon request. Tel. 01256 337294, or asset.data@sse.com.

You must read and accept the following safety notes as part of the contract to receive our network plans. You will have the option to print these and issue them to site staff.

Watch it! - Working in the vicinity of underground cables

Our plans show the positions and normal depths for the buried cables and pipes at the time when they were installed. However, alterations to road alignments surface levels and buildings may have occurred subsequently without our knowledge. If you discover plant or cables that are not marked or incorrectly marked, then you are required to contact us as soon as possible to give us the opportunity to amend our plans.

These plans show the equipment owned by SSEN Distribution. There may be other privately owned plant in the area, which is outside of our control. You should always check with the Local Authority, National Grid Company, Department of the Environment, other Electricity Companies and other utilities before proceeding.

It is not intended that the issue of these plans will absolve either party from their obligation under any of the acts that control digging in the public highways.

Supplies To Properties, etc.

The location of cables supplying individual properties, street lighting, traffic signs, telephone kiosks etc. are not always shown on the plans. You should assume that each property, streetlight etc. will have its own supply cable.

Major Circuits

Where our plans indicate the presence of cables with a voltage exceeding 11,000 volts, you are advised to contact our local depot (telephone number is on the plans), before commencing any excavations within the vicinity of these cables. These major circuits form an extremely important link in SSEN Distributions' networks, damaging or modifying these circuits is a major and costly undertaking. Any development should therefore be designed to allow these circuits to remain undisturbed and accessible in their present location.

For your own and your workmates' safety, please follow the **do's** and **don'ts** listed below:

- ✓ **do** make sure you have plans of the underground cables in the area **before** any excavation work starts. Remember that some cables may not be shown on plans. If carrying out emergency work, excavate as though there are buried live cables in the vicinity.
- ✓ **do** use a cable locator to determine the position of existing cables in the work area. The positions should be marked and tests made as work proceeds. **If in doubt, get advice from your supervisor.**
- ✓ **do** ask for a cable to be made dead if it is buried in concrete.

- ✓ **do** backfill carefully, using stone-free soil around the cables, replacing marker-tapes and / or covers.
- ✓ **do** notify us immediately if you accidentally damage our cables. Arrange to keep people well clear of a cable that has been damaged until we have confirmed it has been made safe.
- ✓ **do** make sure before starting to demolish a building that all cables have been disconnected. We welcome prior notice of the intention to demolish buildings. This enables us to ensure that the site has been made safe electrically.
- ✓ **don't** operate a bulldozer, scraper, dragline or excavator; unless you are satisfied that there are no buried cables in the working area.
- ✓ **don't** use picks, pins, forks or pointed instruments in soft clay or soil when cables are present. Exercise extreme caution where such instruments are used to free lumps of stone, or break up firmly compacted ground. **Never** throw a fork or sharp instrument into the ground.
- ✓ **don't** dig trial holes over the indicated route of the cable. Excavate alongside instead.
- ✓ **don't** use exposed cables as a convenient step or handhold.
- ✓ **don't** handle or attempt to alter the position of any cable.

Remember that a damaged cable may cause extensive loss of supplies, make expensive repairs necessary and cause serious or even fatal injury.

If effective measures are not adopted to protect our equipment, we will take steps to recover the cost of any damage caused. Persons causing damage resulting in loss of supply to customers can be held legally responsible for any claims made by those customers. Promptness in reporting an incident will minimise costs.

In most cases it is not practicable to make cables dead without interrupting supplies to our customers. But given adequate notice, we will wherever possible, give advice regarding special precautions which may be necessary on any site where particular problems are likely to be encountered. The right is reserved to make a charge for this service.

Electricity cables can exist anywhere - under paths or roads, in gardens or driveways, on new housing or industrial development sites or even farmland.

Watch it! - Working in the vicinity of overhead lines

For your own and your workmates' safety, please follow the **do's** and **don'ts** listed below

- ✓ **do** carefully note the position of all overhead lines before commencing work.
- ✓ **do** co-operate with us during planning and sitework stages.
- ✓ **do** follow the advice given in HSE Guidance Note GS 6 when siting barriers, goal posts, bunting etc.
- ✓ **do** keep overhead lines in view when moving scaffolding or machinery and take special care when felling or lopping trees.
- ✓ **do** remember that the raising or slewing of a crane or excavator jib may cause danger when operating near an overhead line.

- ✓ **do** avoid any machinery that is in contact with an overhead line until we confirm that conditions are safe.
- ✓ **do** warn others to keep well clear.
- ✓ **don't** drive a high vehicle below an overhead line when an alternative route is available.
- ✓ **don't** raise the bed of a tipper lorry beneath an overhead line or drive under the line with the body of the vehicle raised.
- ✓ **don't** steady any suspended load until you are satisfied that there is no danger from overhead lines.
- ✓ **don't** handle or use scaffold platforms, poles, pipes or ladders unless they are at a safe distance from overhead lines.
- ✓ **don't** transport long objects beneath overhead lines, unless they are carried in a horizontal position.
- ✓ **don't** approach or touch any broken or fallen overhead lines.

Always remember that:

- Electricity can jump gaps.
- Contact or near contact with a crane jib, scaffold or ladder can cause a discharge of electricity with a risk of fatal or severe shock and burns to any person in the vicinity.

If effective measures are not adopted to protect our equipment, we will take steps to recover the cost of any damage caused. Persons causing damage resulting in loss of supply to customers can be held legally responsible for any claims made by those customers. Promptness in reporting an incident will minimise costs.

In most cases it is not practicable to make overhead lines dead without interrupting supplies to customers. However, provided adequate notice is given, then we will, whenever possible, give advice regarding special precautions which may be necessary on site where specific problems may be encountered. The right is reserved to make a charge for this service.

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