

11KV Cable strike damage by Directional Drill

What Happened?

A sub-contractor was drilling approximately 100 metres for the purpose of installing a new water main when they struck what turned out to be an 11KV cable. Investigations found that there had been a complete failure to adhere to the safe system of work provided.

Personnel on site failed to use Cable Avoidance Tools, Site management failed to check this and ensure team carried out sweep before signing drill permit, Site management and team failed to check service drawings.

UK Power networks attended site and provided evidence that the HV cable was locatable using CAT.

HV cable was clearly marked on the service drawing but team and management on site failed to check drawing.

As a consequence drilling team were suspended as was the MGJV supervisor and sub-contract supervisor

Lessons for the Group

Accountability and responsibility and the consequences of failing to adhere to a prescribed safe system of work are the key lessons that must be promoted.

Each individual, whether direct or sub-contractor, has responsibility for ensuring not only their own safety but that of those who work with them or those who may be affected by their work activities.

This incident was wholly avoidable.



Service drawing clearly depicting sub station and HV cables

Actions Taken

This incident was briefed to all sub-contractors paying particular attention to each and every person whether sub contract or direct employee.

Select Surveys undertook a one-hour assessment per operative on underground service avoidance, including the use of CAT and GENNY. The strength of this one-to-one training is demonstrated by the underground service strike rate falling, with no further strikes occurring during November 2011.

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