

Significant Service Strike causing lost time injury

Outline of Incident

The injured party was digging a small excavation in a footpath to lay a flexi duct to provide electricity into a property. The gang CAT scanned the area and identified the relevant services, the redundant empty clay ducts were removed and lead service was exposed. This was identified as a 240v electrical cable. The cable was damaged by the shovel, which was insulated. The injured person reports a bright flash. The injured party received burns and eye injuries similar to sunburn and "arc-eye" due to the ultra-violet radiation release. He was taken to hospital and released after 10 hours. He was available for work 5 days later, so under the new RIDDOR classification this is non-reportable.

Outcome



The photograph to the left shows the extent of the damage, and shows the lack of warning markings around the cable. There were no classic warnings around the cable for example, a layer of sand or yellow warning tape. The cable itself is leaded sheathed which provides no mechanical protection, so the slightest knock would cause a break.

The photograph also shows how cleanly the other areas of the excavation had been dug so the injured party understood the nature of the hazards involved and safe digging practices.

The other issue identified is that the weather conditions on site were extreme with torrential rain, making visibility difficult.

Recommendations:

- a) On discovering a cable, especially lead covered, STOP work and report the findings to your supervisor. Then adapt your risk assessment to include extra control measures.
- b) The extra control measures may be to move the excavation away from the cable (i.e. avoiding it) or to give the cable extra protection by covering it with hard (plastic ducting) or soft (fibrous) material.
- c) Weather conditions to be formally discussed and recorded on the First 10 minute briefings. This should include any additional control measures required.

Susan Brown
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MGJV

Communication Required: *(double click on box to tick action to be taken)*

Toolbox Talk Notice Board Supply Chain Review of Site Activities Information only €

Actions Completed by: **Date**