

# Safety Alert



make it **safe**  
make it **home**

For Anglian Water employees and contractors Alert No. SA000439 30<sup>th</sup> Jan 2012

## Cable Strike Potentially Serious Incident

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### What happened?

A sub-contractor was on one of our sites hand digging trial holes prior to installing fence posts when they hit an 11KV underground cable with a trenching shovel.

The cable was undetected by the contractors who had used a CAT scanner. There was no electrical warning tape or tiles above or sand bedding around the cables which would normally have been expected. These had been removed by previous construction works and the cables were backfilled with MOT type 1 (road sub-base) to the incorrect depth.

The damage to the cable was sufficient to trip out the circuit at the electrical sub-station and amazingly there were no injuries. Contact with high voltage cables usually results in severe burns or fatal consequences.

### Lessons Learnt:

- Live cables may not be detected when using a CAT (cable avoidance tool) in the "POWER" mode (if the cable is not under load or the cable load is well balanced)
- Use the CAT in both "POWER" and "RADIO" modes **and** use a GENNY (signal generator) whenever locating cables
- Use the GENNY in direct connection or use a signal clamp where possible
- Ensure contractors are provided with service plans if these are available – UK Electricity Network providers will supply service plans of their cables
- Workplace Managers should ensure they have utility plans available on site
- If works are undertaken near to cables – make sure that that they are correctly reinstated (sand covering, warning tape or tiles above and appropriate depth of cover)
- Follow the Safe and Well process for Managing Contractors – ensure the Contract User Checklist is undertaken correctly and that risk assessments/method statements are suitable and sufficient. A [Contractor Digging Checklist](#) is available to help you review these jobs

