



Think
before you...



DIG UNDER GROUND



THINK . . .

Every year people are killed or seriously injured in incidents involving underground electricity cables.



THE DANGER

Underground cables carry a powerful electrical charge which can be conducted through machinery and equipment with fatal consequences. Anyone working close to live underground cables should take time to read this simple safety leaflet and identify the precautions they should be taking.



WHO IS AT RISK?

People in construction, demolition, agriculture, infrastructure or anywhere else where excavation is taking place. That is why it is vital everyone working on or visiting a working site is fully aware of the hazards and the steps that must be taken to avoid them.



HOW INCIDENTS HAPPEN

Sadly, accidents where excavators, breakers or other tools make contact with power cables are not uncommon. Where equipment or machinery is used near underground cables the risk must be considered and controlled in the interests of everyone.

THINK AHEAD

Get the basics right. Familiarise yourself with the site. Mark the route of underground cables running across the site on all plans circulated to staff. Find out if the work could be carried out away from the cables, or avoided all together.

UK Power Networks is committed to safety and actively encourages anyone undertaking work to contact us in advance for advice and free cable locating maps.

These will help you avoid our underground cables during your work, which is vital for your safety as well as ensuring we can provide a reliable supply of electricity.

For free maps and advice call **0800 056 5866** or write to:

Plan Provision

UK Power Networks

Fore Hamlet

Ipswich

IP3 8AA

plans@ukpowernetworks.co.uk

We can advise you on what steps to take if essential work is necessary close to underground cables and help ensure safe working practises are implemented.

Good management reduces the risk of accidents. With proper planning and control, workers should not come into contact with underground cables.

If excavation work forms a part of your day-to-day activities obtain a copy of the Health & Safety Executive's Guidance Note "Avoiding Danger from Underground Services" HSG47, which is free to download from the HSE's website - **www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg47.pdf**



WHAT TO DO

- **Have cable drawings and records on site**, know how to read them and check them before starting work. Be aware that not all cables may be shown on the records.
- **Look around for anything in the vicinity** that would have an electricity service, such as street lights, CCTV cameras, phone boxes, etc. as well as the more obvious things like houses and industrial units.
- **Always** use a cable avoidance tool (CAT) to survey the entire site before digging commences. Once found, mark cable positions with spray paint or similar. Do not forget to use encroachment lines as well.
- **Dig trial holes**, by hand, alongside the indicated route of the cables(s).
- Use spades and shovels with **insulated handles** in preference to forks and picks.
- **Make sure everyone** on site, including visitors, **understand the risks**.
- If there is a **cable encased in concrete** contact **UK Power Networks to agree a safe method of work**. This may mean making the cable dead.
- Before demolishing a building **make sure that supplies are disconnected**, preferably well clear of the work area.
For guidance on how to arrange a disconnection visit www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk – Our Services
- Have the **emergency contact telephone number** easily available on site.



WHAT NOT TO DO

- Never allow anyone near a damaged or suspected damaged cable or joint.
- Do not handle or attempt to alter the position of a cable or joint.
- Never assume that cables run in straight lines, they may be deflected around underground obstacles.
- Do not use mechanical excavator or powered digging tool within the vicinity of known cables.
- Never knock a road pin, or forcibly throw a spiked digging tool into the ground, without checking what is below the surface.





IF A CABLE IS DAMAGED

Notify UK Power Networks immediately:

London 0800 028 0247

East of England 0800 783 8838

South East 0800 783 8866

Call the emergency services if anyone is injured. Anyone who has received an electrical shock should go to hospital as damage may have occurred to the heart.

Always **treat the cable(s) as live** even if they are not sparking.
Cables can be re-energised at any time without warning.

Never remove anything that is stuck **in a cable**.

Keep everyone well away from the area of the damage.

Do NOT attempt to remove anything that is in contact with the cable.



PLAN IT OUT

**CHECK IT OUT BEFORE
YOU DIG UNDER GROUND**





DANGER OF DEATH

THINK BEFORE
YOU DIG

Call the network operator

0800 587 3243

www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk

If you are unsure of your network operator then please
visit www.energynetworks.org