

ENVIRONMENTAL ALERT

7 MARCH 2014

Potential SF₆ Gas Cylinder Loss

WHAT HAPPENED?

SF₆ gas is used in circuit breakers and gas insulated switchgear as an electrical insulating gas. It has a very high global warming potential being 22,800 times more potent than Carbon Dioxide as a greenhouse gas. Wilful release of SF₆ is an offence in NZ.

Incident

Following the installation of SF₆ gas for the HVDC pole 3 project in Benmore, four partially full SF₆ gas cylinders had been dispatched to a local scrap merchant for disposal as opposed to following Transpower's storage requirements.

Transpower **must report to the NZ Environmental Protection Authority its SF₆ gas inventory and any accidental leakage** of gas annually. In this instance insufficient management of gas transactions has occurred.

No incident has been recorded. This is unacceptable.



IMMEDIATE ACTION TAKEN

- Cylinders have been recovered from the scrap merchant before the gas had been released to the environment.
- Cylinder weights requested to be made and recorded to contribute to a full inventory of gas transactions on the project.
- Project alerted to proper disposal route for SF₆ gas via Transpowers gas management contractor PBA

LEARNINGS

Ensure awareness of Service Specification, TP.SS 02.29, Sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆) Gas and Handling Equipment Maintenance and Management on any project with SF₆ gas transactions.

Project contract documentation must make responsibilities clear where SF₆ gas transactions are required.