

Newsflash – 2019 01**14 January 2019 - Internal**

Every employee and contractor, working for Northern Powergrid, should go home at the end of each shift uninjured and in good health after a productive days work

HV Cable Jointing Incident

On 10 January 2019 a third year apprentice acting as a mate to a jointer inadvertently damaged a live HV cable whilst working on an adjacent HV circuit. The damage caused a flashover within the joint hole which resulted in the jointer receiving a burn injury to his hand.

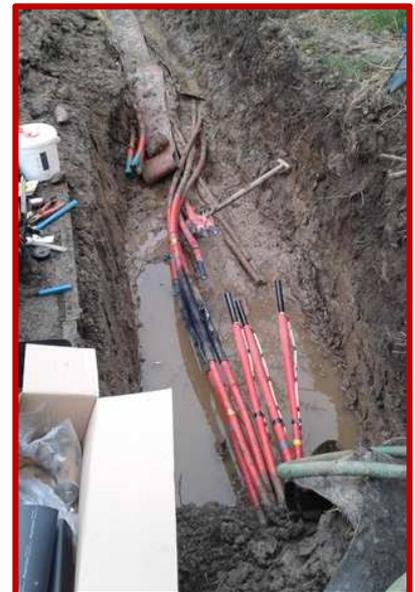
The work was associated with a reinforcement scheme to increase circuit capacity that involved replacing the 11kV cables. The work site contained two 11kV circuits where the cables were being replaced with modern triplex 11kV cables. The two circuits being replaced were in the same cable trench and both circuits were exposed at the jointing location. The work to replace the first cable had been completed on the previous day and the second circuit was isolated and earthed in accordance with Distribution Safety Rules and the jointer had been issued with a Permit-to-Work to carry out jointing work.

Initial indications are that the incident occurred whilst the jointer was cutting one core of the Triplex 11kV cable to the correct length for jointing using a battery operated reciprocating saw (Milwaukee Sawzall). As the saw came to the end of the cut the saw dropped and the blade cut into the insulation of an unprotected joint on the live 11kV triplex cable below, penetrating the insulation and causing a flashover to the live connector on the joint. The circuit protection operated and tripped the circuit out.

As a result of the flashover the jointer received burn injuries to his hand. Colleagues on site reacted immediately and applied a burns dressing pack. The jointer was taken to hospital by his supervisor where the burn injury was assessed. Fortunately injuries are confined to a blistered hand.

We recently mandated the use of Arc Flash protection in jointing situations where there are other live cables present in the joint hole. I'm pleased to say both operatives were wearing their arc flash PPE and it served its purpose and prevented injuries being more extensive.

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The incident is at the very early stages of investigation but it is necessary to remind all our craftsmen of one specific safety measure and three generic safety principles that are applicable at all times.

Specifically, the use reciprocating saws of any variety for jointing work is prohibited until further notice. Other approved and trained methods of cutting must be used.



Generically, the following safety precautions must be followed:

- 1. The importance of following work procedures as trained**
- 2. Always using the correct, approved equipment for the task.**
- 3. When risk assessing the work site, consider all potential hazards in the work area and take time to mitigate the potential 'Line-of-Fire' type hazards, where an unforeseen error, no matter how unlikely, could have serious consequences.**