

# PANEL OF INQUIRY

## ScottishPowerExpress

Reference no.: EXP-14-093

Incident: SP-POI-1025395

Date: 15/05/2019



## LIVE 11,000 Volt Pole Falls Onto Excavator

On Saturday 15th September 2018, an energised 11,000 volt wood pole substation became unstable as a direct result of inadequate planning of the task, which led to unsafe digging practices.

Consequently the pole fell onto the excavator, with the transformer entering and coming to rest in the operator's cab.

The main line protection operated correctly, with the circuit breaker completing a full auto-reclose sequence before locking out.

During this time, the operator was trapped inside the excavator only inches away from the transformer's high voltage terminals.

This incident resulted in a POI being formed to undertake a full investigation, including how the work was planned and programmed.

### POI Findings

The Panel concluded that the root cause for the incident is the ineffectiveness of how the main contractor set their sub-contractor to work, through failing to:

- Ensure the working party were sufficiently competent to undertake the task;
- Effectively plan and apply a safe system of work for their sub-contractor;
- Adequately recognise and identify risks and hazards;
- Effectively apply the control of risks; and
- Provide adequate on-going management, control and monitoring of the work activity.



### Recommendations and action points

The Panel noted that whilst the operator and working party held the required training and experience to operate the plant and undertake excavations, they were not considered sufficiently competent to excavate in proximity to electrical poles nor to recognise or address the hazards present.

***Competence should take into account the ability to not only undertake the task but also the ability to recognise the wider environment and manage potential hazards.***