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## Metal Theft / Stolen System Earthing

The problem of third party trespass, vandalism and theft of copper earthing from our electrical distribution network continues to present an operational hazard that we need to be mindful of.

Our electricity distribution network is flush with copper rich assets, and fluctuations in copper prices can influence the level of criminal activity to our infrastructure. Theft from our infrastructure is often seen as a “victimless crime” although we know the safety consequences to the public, third parties and our operatives are well known and include injuries, house fires, and customer electrical appliance damage.

Interruption of electricity supply often results directly from theft from our electrical equipment or indirectly when supplies need isolating to enable repairs to be undertaken safely by our operatives.

We continue to receive reports every week of substation installations or wood pole assets where the earthing has been stolen and the integrity of the system earthing has been impacted.

This brief sets out to provide a reminder of the impacts and consequences of metal theft, the positive response taken by Northern Powergrid and the ways in which you can engage with the problem to make a difference.



### **Remember – your safety is paramount, don't put yourself at risk**

Please be aware that metal theft and criminal activity can occur at any time – always check electrical equipment before its operation to ensure the earthing is still intact. Although we have seen a reduction in the overall number of instances of metal theft from our network in recent year it is far from being stamped out.

**Metal theft – be aware, it's still out there!!!**

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### What can you do to help?

- Include metal theft as part of your routine risk assessment ensuring checks are made prior to starting work and on leaving a site.
- Don't leave attractive copper rich assets on view, ensure sites are safe and secure.
- If you discover vandalism or theft of our electrical equipment report it in line with the company process.
- If you discover or investigate an incident of theft and believe there is forensic evidence on site that would assist police investigations, insist that the police visit site to do further checks.
- If you spot any assets that look vulnerable and more at risk, report them via the 159 process. (I.e. vacated factory buildings, isolated s/s buildings left in derelict environments that have an increased risk of attack).
- If you are called to attend to a fault by Control or Dispatch, check if they are aware of any metal theft hot spot issues that you should be aware of. Some of these metal theft sites are on our radar as theft has happened several times.
- If you are called to attend to a known metal theft issue be aware that the thieves could still be on site and consider attending with a second person and stay alert.
- Ensure you have a robust communication plan with Control or Dispatch to ensure they know where you are going.
- Always call for assistance if you feel you are vulnerable.
- Involve the Police in any significant metal theft issue.



Northern Powergrid will continue to review our response to the changing criminal activity but **we all need to remain vigilant to ensure a robust response to our copper theft problem.**

Notes of Guidance for the Reporting of Third Party Trespass, Vandalism, Interference and Theft to the Electrical Distribution System, [IMP/002/002/001/003](#), provides details of the process, important contact details and documentation to complete and can be found on CDS.

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Page	1 of 5

#### IMP/002/002/001/003 – Notes of Guidance for the Site Reporting of Third Party Trespass, Vandalism, Interference and Theft to the Electrical Distribution System

##### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on the requirements and process for reporting incidents of third party trespass, vandalism, interference or metal theft, from site by field staff, on assets that are connected to or will be connected to the Company electrical distribution system or may have been connected to the electrical distribution system.