

Issued to:
Location:

SAFETY BULLETIN SB7/2018

Live 11kV Cable Opened in Error

Background

A jointing team were investigating a LV cable fault and a location had been established where there was also a HV cable present in the same footpath. Excavation was completed, with only one cable being exposed and the assumption was made that it was LV. The HV cable was clearly marked on the plans and the jointer was aware of its presence.

Detail

Using live working techniques the cable jointer began opening what he assumed to be the LV cable. After removing the lead sheath and the screening he realised the cable was likely to be HV. He stopped work before any further incident occurred and called for assistance from a Senior Authorised Person. They confirmed after the necessary identification that a live HV cable had been opened.

What went wrong?

The LV cable to be worked on was not positively identified, as is required by ST:OS4A. It was assumed that the single exposed cable was the LV cable when in fact it was an HV cable.

Current cable identification policy states:

- Before starting work on any LV cable, the cable shall be positively identified in accordance with ST: OS4A/2 – Relating to the identification and proving dead of underground cables.
- Positive visual indication that a cable is LV shall be from one or more of the following.
 - a) The presence of an LV joint on the cable e.g. with a service attached
 - b) Presence of a black PVC over sheath clearly embossed 600/1000V (there are some black PVC HV cables in the ground)
 - c) All other cables on site having been exposed and positively identified
- Where positive visual identification of the cable is not possible other techniques such as the use of an approved LV cable identification tool, electrical injection or spiking may be required.
- If a cable is opened and it is suspected to be HV then the staff should vacate the joint hole and secure the area to ensure no-one approaches the cable until it is made safe.
- If there is any doubt around any cable identification, work must stop immediately and advice sought.

Follow-Up Actions

- Distribution Managers shall personally brief all relevant staff. They should also note SB2/2015 & SB5/2018 where similar incidents occurred.
- This bulletin shall be briefed and recorded on personal records as TBX89

This bulletin is issued without prejudice to any investigation being carried out.