



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

Stay focused on safety in 2016

After the rush and excitement of the Christmas and New Year we find ourselves back at work. Unfortunately we did have to contend with a major event involving the floods during the festive break which interrupted the holiday for a number of staff. In relation to the major incident event, both the response from staff and the safety performance during the period was commendable without a single safety incident being reported in this high hazard period. Hopefully for those involved with the flood even you still found time to have an enjoyable break over the festive period. Now that the festive holiday is behind us, we want to take this opportunity to remind everyone that after such a break we need to be focused on our safety as statistics show that the period following a return from a break result in some of the highest levels of incidents. Returning to the routine work activities after this type of absence puts us all at a higher risk of incident. To try and prevent these incidents from happening, we are asking all of you to take the time to prepare for your return to work.



Regrettably, we had two accidents last Thursday resulting in injuries to both employees involved and a preventable vehicle accident occurred on the Wednesday of last week.

The first incident involved an operative's vehicle being rear ended by a third party vehicle whilst stationary at traffic lights. The operative concerned has suffered whiplash injuries and was in shock when the emergency services attended. Our driver was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time and at the mercy of another motorist who simply wasn't driving to the required standard. The terrible fatal accident to the Northern Natural Gas employee reported in the daily Berkshire Hathaway Safety update reminds us how vulnerable we can be and that's why we want to provide all our drivers with defensive driving training such as AlertDriving to minimize, as far we possibly can, the risk of injury whilst operating our vehicles as part of the very necessary service we provide.

The second incident, which would appear more under our control, involved a linesman trapping his hand in the door of a tracked utility lifting vehicle. The linesman was using the vehicle to replace a broken pole that had been damaged by a fallen tree during the recent storms. The linesman exited the vehicle to get a better idea of clearances and was holding the door frame when the door has slammed shut on his hand. Other colleagues on site stated that the conditions were not noticeably windy but that a sudden gust of wind may have caused the door to slam shut. Fortunately there were no broken bones but a puncture wound and severe swelling to the hand will keep our colleague off work for a few days.



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Whilst both incidents are still under investigation we should regard them as nudge to reminder to us all to ensure we quickly refocus on our work following the festive break.

The preventable vehicle accident occurred on a journey between worksites. The company driver was approaching a roundabout in the right-hand lane of a dual carriageway. A learner driver had stalled in the lane to his left and this had caused a recycling truck following behind to manoeuvre around the stationary vehicle and in doing so had moved into the outside lane ahead of our driver. He thought he had an adequate gap to get through between the truck and the outside kerb but as he tried to get through the gap he had misjudged the size of the gap and collided with the offside rear corner of the truck.

Whether undertaking a work activity or driving we need to make sure we are aware of our surrounding at all times and be wary of the things that can go wrong. Don't just look after yourself, consider your colleagues and make sure you challenge any unsafe situations or behaviour you encounter.



To use one of my sporting analogies, one lapse of concentration can result in losing the match. How many football teams let in a goal shortly after the half time break through failure to quickly get back into the correct mindset?

Remember, it is a team effort and every one of us can play a part and make a difference.

Where safety is concerned, when things go well, we may not appreciate how much of a difference we have made but, you can almost guarantee, when things don't go so well we will have a good idea of how we could have made a difference. Let's not chance putting ourselves in the latter situation. Carry out a thorough risk assessment before starting work and then review that assessment on an ongoing basis as conditions change, especially if things do not go as planned.

Anytime a colleague is injured at work, it is a serious blow because **we fail** on our sincere objective that every employee and contractor working for Northern Powergrid should go home from work at the end of each shift uninjured and in good health after a productive days work. It also seems to follow that we are at our most vulnerable when hazards are viewed to be insignificant and the risk of injury negligible. In these cases, effective protection can only come from personal awareness, concentration and attention to the task in hand and our colleagues constantly providing encouragement, and guidance where necessary to watch our backs – teamwork. It hasn't been the start we'd hoped for in week one of 2016 but let's all make it our personal responsibility to make sure we watch out for ourselves and our work mates. I wish my colleagues a speedy recovery.

Stay focused, keep your mind on the task and stay safe in 2016