



## *Safety Advice 16-2014- (NZ) (Mar)*

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The following Safety Advice courtesy of Powerco relates to a flashover incident that occurred while investigating a gas leak. The full advice follows below

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# SAFETY NOTICE

NOTICE TO ALL NETWORK STAKEHOLDERS



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## SAFETY NOTICE – Working Safely Around Underground Utilities

A High Potential Incident (HPI) occurred recently when a Powerco contractor, while investigating a gas leak, was asked to test for gas in an electricity substation by the asset owner's contractor. The stainless steel probe of the gas detector came in close proximity to a live component in the substation and an electrical flash over occurred; no injury was sustained.

### Lessons learned:

Why did it happen?

- A hazard identification / tailgate did not take place prior to the Powerco contractor entering the substation.
- The electricity contractors did not expect someone to place a probe in a live panel. Their expectation was that the Powerco contractor had been trained on how to work safely on the electricity network. There may have been an assumption that the Powerco contractor covered both electricity and gas networks.

The important things you should remember about this:

- Always assume that any person entering the worksite is not competent or familiar.
- Always complete a hazard identification / tailgate with visitors before they access a worksite or equipment.
- Ensure you find out exactly what the person is going to do before they enter a worksite.
- If the person is not fully competent and authorised to enter the site in their own right, you must directly supervise them while they are on site.

All utility owners should be aware that there is the possibility of gas pipelines being present in the area where they or their contractors may be working. If gas pipelines are laid with or near electricity cables, there is the possibility that leaking gas may track through the cable ducts or trenches.

To minimise the risk of gas tracking into electricity substations asset owners should ensure that cable ducts, trenches or similar features are sealed where practicable to prevent gas ingress into the substation room.

If you smell gas in a substation or similar, **DO NOT ENTER**. The following steps are recommended:

- Know what to do in a gas emergency.
- Phone Powerco on **0800 111 848** or your local gas distribution company to report a smell of gas.
- Consult with the gas distribution company about when it is safe to enter.
- Complete a toolbox prior to entering the substation to identify the hazards.

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