Safety Alert 25-77 11Kva Cable Strike

The following Safety Alert contains content from an external source which is relevant to MWH Treatment Operations

What Happened?

In advance of laying a raw watermains from the existing site to the new site, operatives were tasked with digging trial holes on known services to determine the line and depth of the service, to ensure no impact on the line and level of the mains to be installed. The excavation works proceeded (following a CAT scan to identify the location of the cable) using the hand dig method until they reached the warning tape. The operative then began to dig to the side of the warning tape to further expose the cable and in doing so the spade went through the warning tape and dug into the cable. The ground was stiff clay and there was no sand or stone surrounding the cable, so the operative was digging with force. The operative believed that there would be a gap between the warning tape and the cable, but the warning tape was sitting on top of the cables. The cable blew out and went on fire for a short period. The operative was uninjured as he was using fibreglass non-conductive spade.

Immediate Action:

- Works were stopped and the excavation barriered off.
- UKPN attended site and de-energised the cable. The excavation was then opened up to allow for the repair of the cable
- 2-2-2 process was followed to alert NWL and Farrans Senior Management of the incident
- Investigation took place into how the incident occurred

Learning Points.

- Never assume that the warning tape has the recommended required depth between it and the cable
- When trying to locate a known HV cable, Vacuum Excavation should be the first consideration then if this is not achievable, risk assess the use of an excavator to excavate to the side of the cable (no closer than 500mm) and then continue to manually expose around the cable when the material is easier to remove

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Authorised by:	Zoe Robertson	**Date:**	22/10/2025
Distribution list:	*Operations, Capital Delivery, Contractors, and Executive Management Team*		

MWHT Requirements.

Actions

- Always follow your Safe System of Work
- Always remember the Lifesaving Commitments
- Follow the advice contained in this Safety Alert
- Ensure you complete a Safe Start card at the start of your shift
- If in **DOUBT STOP WORK** and seek advice from your supervisor
- Report all Incidents or "Improve Its"

Manager:		**Project No:**	
Date:		**Project:**	

BRIEFING RECORD: I HAVE UNDERSTOOD THE BRIEFING ON THIS SAFETY INFORMATION AND AGREE TO COMPLY WITH MWHT REQUIREMENTS.

Name	Signature	Company