

Safety Alert

ASP Compliance & Practices



Alert Number: SA04_17
Subject: Cable Strike Incident

Date: 19 April 2017

Key Message/s

When working near or around live underground cables always follow the requirements of NS156 and where required NS165 (in or around substations).

Preparation: Ensure that DBYD / up to date network plans / GIS / service location diagram/s are onsite and reviewed in full prior to starting mechanical excavation works.

Excavating: Carefully hand dig / pothole / vacuum excavate until **all known cables are positively identified**. Use observers and approved safe work methods at all times when mechanical excavation is taking place.

Description of incident or hazard

An ASP1 contestable works assistant (CWA) hit and damaged an in-service 11kV feeder cable at Wahroonga with the jack hammer. The feeder cable was located approximately 800mm from the property boundary and buried at 500mm to 600mm deep. The cable was situated with Ausgrid's standard allocation and was indicated on the DBYD plans and the Ausgrid certified design.

A cable scan of existing assets was conducted prior to work commencing but failed to identify all known cables that were indicated on the certified design and dial before you dig plans.

The ASP1 failed to work within Ausgrid standards by:

- Not positively identifying all cables prior to starting mechanical excavation works near the network.
- Using a jack hammer within minimum clearances of existing live UG cables



Extent of Impact

In this case no person was injured, however cable strike incidents are continuing to occur on Ausgrid's network and pose a serious risk to the safety of person's onsite and the community.

Immediate Action Taken (or to be taken) to Eliminate or Control Risk

Re-affirm the importance of always following the requirements of the ESR, NS156 and NS165.

Key issues as per the key message include:

- **Consideration of the requirement for an access permit when digging near cables;**
- **Having up to date and legible DBYD, and where required Network or Service Location Diagrams;**
- **Use of potholing or vacuum excavation methods to positively identify all UG assets prior to commencing mechanical excavation activities; and**
- **The importance of maintaining communication with equipment operators and observers when excavation works near known network cables.**

Ausgrid

Project Officer