

## **SAFETY ALERT N°67**

### **11kV SERVICE STRIKE**

#### **What Happened**

On November 18<sup>th</sup> at Abbey Mills, during the excavation of a manhole, an 11kV cable outer sheath was damaged. Operations were stopped right away and the cable was isolated and repaired.

This incident could have resulted in a fatality or serious injury if there had been contact with the high voltage electrical cable.



#### **Recommendations**

Digging operations can be hazardous and a Safe System of Work and hierarchy of control must always be implemented and followed. Safe working method includes:

##### **1- Planning of the works:**

- Acquisition of plans of the area of excavation: Drawings **do not necessarily show the exact position of the services**, but give indication of their existence and their approximate location
- Method statements and risk assessments must identify the potential hazards associated with the excavations
- A Permit to Dig should be used and must identify all the required controls and drawings
- Operatives tasked must be competent in the activity of digging
- All operatives involved in the activity must receive a task briefing, understand the risks arising from the activity

##### **2- Detection, identification and marking of UG services:**

- Services should be precisely located and marked using detection equipment such as Cable Avoidance Tools
- Never assume cables are suitably buried, at a given depth or run in straight lines
- Personnel carrying out cable location activity must be trained and experienced

##### **3- Safe digging practices:**

- Use of a competent top banksman to assist digging operations
- Mechanical excavators or power tools shouldn't be used within 0.5 metre of the suspected route of the underground services
- Buried services should be uncovered using careful digging by hand
- Uncovered services should be identified and labelled

If you feel unsure about your competence in carrying out the CAT & Genny survey then you should inform your supervisor.