

Safety Bulletin



LIVE 11,000 Volt Pole Mounted Substation Falls onto Excavator

Whilst an excavation was undertaking works at the base of a live 11,000 volt pole mounted substation, the pole became unstable which resulted in the transformer falling into the cab. In addition, the conductors fell across the rear of the excavator.

The excavation was part of the advanced works for a planned HV shutdown. The pole, which in itself did not fail, fell narrowly missing the cab, but the transformer trapped the operator inside.

The 11kV main line protection carried out its full auto-reclose sequence and locked-out with the operator being trapped inside the cab. Whilst this was a significant incident with potentially fatal consequences, miraculously the operator received no injuries.

A Panel of Inquiry has been established to determine the root cause of the incident. This is an opportunity to remind all relevant operational persons about the requirements for undertaking similar works.

Recommendations & Actions:

Guidance for pole excavations are provided by your local DNO. You should find detail of this in **Excavation and Reinstatement Requirements for Pole and Stay Holes**. Ensure these safety requirements are applied, followed and understood prior to setting teams to work. Please also ensure you hold the correct relevant current authorisations.

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When any excavation work adjacent to poles is planned or taking place and you have any doubts, concerns or issues about the condition of either the pole, the stay rod or the tension on the line then **STOP** and contact your Team Leader or Supervisor.



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