

Safety Alert

Protester Tunnelling

27 April 2022

Background information

Over the last few months various protest groups have conducted a variety of protests against government climate policy and have targeted oil refineries, fuel distribution sites and the SRN.

On Friday 22 April a tunnel was discovered in the vicinity of Junction 10 of the M42 close to an oil terminal. This is not the only case in which a tunnel has been dug under a road, in an attempt to weaken the road surface above, possibly to the extent of collapse.

Protesters are attempting to conceal their tunnelling activity by using tarpaulins or caravans or other objects to screen the entrance excavations.

Even if the tunnel does not compromise the road surface, there are significant safety issues for those tunnelling, our customers, and staff. It is likely that this tactic will continue, with protesters targeting parts of the network as part of their ongoing strategy.



Lessons Learnt

- Vigilance by staff and supply chain partners, and reporting any suspicious activity to the relevant Regional Operations Centre as a matter of urgency will allow the Police to respond and put a stop to tunnelling.
- Tunnelling can be identified by the presence of digging tools, caravans and other objects seemingly abandoned on the roadside, tarpaulins etc which may be used to conceal tunnelling.
- Any part of the SRN could be targeted, but those parts of the SRN close to refineries and oil storage depots are particularly at risk.