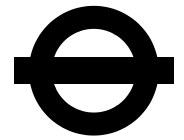


Transport for London

Health and Safety Bulletin – Surface Transport



Cable Strike Incident

Date of issue: May 2015

Background

The Highbury Corner Bridge Structure is being refurbished as part of the TfL Surface Transport Structures & Tunnels Portfolio. The works include demolition and upgrading of the Bridge. To carry out these works, traffic management arrangements have modified traffic movements at Highbury Corner reducing 2 lanes down to 1 in either direction.

The works required the installation of signage and posts to reduce 'rat-running' through narrow side streets in the area as a consequence of lane reductions. During the installation of the second sign-post an operative came across a service that was encased and struck a cable. He suffered burns following electrical discharge. He was using mechanical tools. The emergency services arrived and took the injured party to hospital.

Initial findings identified additional activities were scheduled outside of the normal planning/programming process. The operatives were instructed to carry out the intrusive work by their supervisor and were not wearing flame retardant PPE, as specified in the Risk Assessment & Method Statement. Had the appropriate PPE been worn the IP's injuries may have been lessened.

The stats drawings and GPR surveys previously undertaken did not cover the location of this sign post installation, Though the area was CAT scanned, it was done without using the associated 'Genny', resulting in the 'live' cable going undetected. Further investigation also highlighted further issues regarding the confidence of the operatives in using this equipment.



Injured party received burns to both forearms (the more extensive being the outer left forearm), burns to the inner upper thigh (left leg) and burns to the face and neck.

Instruction

- Adequate enquiries must be made into the location of sub-surface utilities including the acquisition of suitable STATS drawings and appropriate surveys – eg. BSI PAS 128, confidence level surveys, A, B, C,D.
- Only competent persons must undertake scanning of the area, using suitable, calibrated equipment, prior to any intrusive works taking place, marking any findings with spray paint or similar. Scanning may need to be repeated throughout the excavation process.
- All equipment should be maintained, tested and used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Risk assessments and method statements, along with any other relevant information, must be provided and adequately communicated to the workforce by competent supervisors especially where English is a 2nd language, assuring that the information is understood. Adequate supervision is then a key factor in ensuring a safe working system is in place on site, including the use of appropriate PPE as identified in project specific risk assessments.
- Tasks additional to the main work/original scope, even when considered small tasks, do not automatically represent a lower level of risk and should therefore follow the same processes and procedures, employing the same safe system of work. Arrangements should be in place to communicate any changes to the design and scope of works with all relevant parties which includes obtaining advice from competent construction health & safety practitioners.

Further Info

TfL ST SQA 0587 – Pre Works Utility Appraisal

BSI PAS 128 – Specification for Underground Utility Detection, Verification and Location

HSE HSG 47 – Avoiding danger from underground services.

For construction health and safety information visit the [Construction Safety Team Online](#) or email [CDM Team](#)