



Safety Alert

Contact with overhead electric cables

20 September 2021

The following pages of this safety alert were issued by:

**Department for Infrastructure
Roads & Rivers**



DfI Roads & Rivers HEALTH AND SAFETY ALERT 30

Contact with overhead electric cables

- Recently an external contractor carrying out surface dressing struck a single live overhead electric cable with the raised tipping-body of a lorry.
- A risk assessment had been carried out prior to commencement which included the location of overhead services and concluded that goal posts were not deemed necessary.
- The vehicle was being guided by a banksman at the time of the incident who was momentarily blinded by direct sunlight and distracted by unexpected public vehicles entering the works area.
- The banksman missed the overhead warning signs and the lorry entered the 'No Tip Zone' with its body in a raised position striking the overhead cable.
- Thankfully there were no injuries or damage caused.

Key Points for Roads and Rivers Activities:

- Operatives must comply with Safe Systems of Work 12 (SSW12) - Working On or Near Services.
- Operatives must comply with HSE guidance GS6 – "Avoiding Danger from Overhead Power Lines" Operatives must comply with the control measures stated in Activity Safety Control – Surface Dressing.
- Line Managers must carry out a site specific risk assessment for overhead cables, before work starts.
- Goalposts should be erected unless their omission can be justified. The decision not to use goalposts is to be documented.
- Refer to [Surface Dressing Protocol](#) dated 11 May 2020 on the use of goal posts.



Lessons Learned:

- Goalposts offer a more effective control, alerting operatives to the presence of overhead cables, and should be erected if possible.
- Be aware of possible sun strike especially when facing the sun.
- For further information regarding dangers associated with sun strike see Safety Alert 26.
- Seek to minimise the opportunity of distractions while work operations are passing under overhead cables.
- All instances of non-conformance are to be reported immediately.
- Further advice can be obtained from your line manager or the Health & Safety Advice and Audit Team at: David.Bramall@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk – Tel 31464.