

INCIDENT ALERT

LOCATION: Quarry
ACTIVITY: Manual handling and storage
SUB ACTIVITY: NA
ALERT STATUS: Normal
DATE ISSUED: 20/07/06
INCIDENT No: 00069

TITLE

Underground services

ACCIDENT / INCIDENT DETAILS

During the last month there have been 3 incidents at Torr Works which have involved workmen striking buried services. Two of these resulted in 440V electric cables being severed and the third fractured a gas oil pipeline. Fortunately no one was injured in these incidents but each one had potentially fatal consequences.

On Saturday 16th November a breaker was hammering out the concrete floor of the silt trap by the Stothert and Pitt coating plant. It had not been anticipated that there would be cable immediately beneath the structure and it had not been scanned. The cable feeding the bitumen tanks was severed and a temporary cable had to be run to keep the plant operational.

On the following Saturday during the laying of a permanent cable to the plant, two other buried services were hit. The area being dug had been scanned and the approximate position of the cable identified. However, during the hand digging work with a pick axe the spike penetrated the cable and shorted out the cable. Later on the excavator digging the trench hit a buried gas oil pipe. This was not identified during the scan and there were no records of its presence.

ACCIDENT / INCIDENT IMAGES



New cable being installed

LEARNING POINTS / ACTIONS TAKEN

The main learning points from these incidents are that suspect the unexpected. Torr is an old quarry which has been modified and been build up over the years in an ad hoc fashion. Cables could be anywhere and all excavation/digging work must be scanned prior to work commencing and have a permit to dig issued.

It must be remembered that the scanning process is not an exact science and extreme care is needed when encountering any cables or other services. If the ground is so hard that a pick axe has to be used then the cable must be isolated first. If the exact cable cannot be identified then this may entail isolating the whole sub station, which may mean that the work has be undertaken outside of working hours.

LEARNING POINTS / ACTIONS IMAGES