

Watch Out Cables About

TOP TIPS

- Always be mindful of what services lie below ground when digging or excavating. Ask utility companies for plans in advance.
- Identify the dangers and hazards associated with excavations.
- Take care when digging, always locate underground cables before digging.
- Hand Dig — use safe digging techniques to carry out and maintain excavations around underground cables.
- Always assume underground cables are live even when damaged.
- Take care when lowering the ground level or creating a new roadway or path as there may be underground cables in the area.
- To find the local electricity network operator, search 'electricity distribution map' on the ENA website at www.energynetworks.org.

In an emergency dial **999** and tell them electricity is involved.

Call **105** if you have a safety concern related to the electricity network or if you spot damage to overhead power lines, underground cables and substations that could put you, or someone else, in danger.



**DANGER
OF DEATH**



**PERYGL
MARWOLAETH**

Watch Out Cables About

Safety advice for anyone who is digging or excavating.



Watch Out Cables About

Follow the advice in Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Guidance Note HSG47 *Avoiding danger from underground services* and carry out a risk assessment.

Underground cables are situated in public highways and roads, paths and fields across the country, and whilst buried and unnoticed, they are essential to provide electricity to homes and businesses across the UK.

Houses, offices, shops, factories and street furniture all have electric cables supplying them. The cables carry voltages ranging from 230 volts (domestic voltage) up to 400,000 volts. Even domestic voltage cables can be fatal and can be buried outside homes and in driveways.

People die each year due to accidentally striking underground cables in the ground, whilst others suffer life changing injury with the lives of families also suffering as a result. The risk of danger can be considerably reduced by following some simple safety tips.

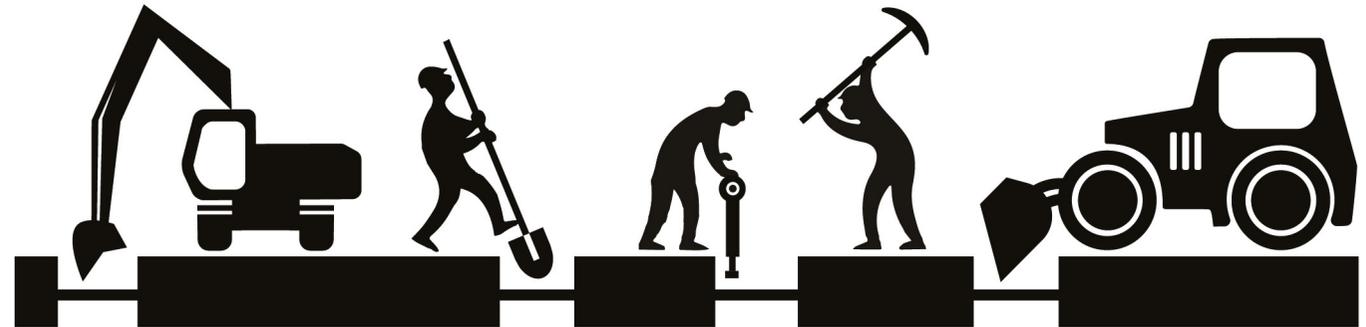
Be aware of what lies beneath.

WATCH OUT CABLES ABOUT!

This is advice for anyone digging or excavating.

Situations where underground services may be found and disturbed, include:

- street works
- road works
- excavation, drilling and piling
- demolition and site remediation
- site investigation surveys
- any other work that involves penetrating the ground at or below surface level



How to avoid...

Before beginning any excavations be mindful and dig safely:

- Make sure you have current copies of underground cable record plans from the electricity network operator. If you cannot find underground cables shown on the plan never assume they are not there — contact your electricity network operator.
- Make sure that a competent person using a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) locates all of the cables shown on these plans.
- Mark the location of cables on the ground surface.
- Hand-dig trial holes to find the exact position of underground cables before you use a mechanical excavator.
- Be aware that underground cables can be found at any depth, even just below the surface.
- If you find an underground cable embedded in concrete do not attempt to break it out. Contact your electricity network operator to ensure it is de-energised.
- If you damage an underground cable, vacate the excavation immediately, phone your electricity network operator's emergency number and keep everybody clear.

If you are in any doubt about whether an underground cable or other piece of equipment is safe, always assume it is live, keep away from it and contact your local electricity network operator.

What to do if...

Injuries are usually caused by the explosive effects of arcing current, and by any associated fire or flames that may result when a live cable is penetrated by a sharp object such as the point of a tool.

If any part of your equipment comes in to contact with an underground cable:

- Immediately phone Emergency Services and your local electricity network operator on the national number 105.
- Keep others away from the impacted area.
- Clear all other hazardous material from the area.

Remember that metal and anything wet conducts electricity, so always carry long objects parallel with the ground — never vertically. Contact with a live line through a long object is just as dangerous as touching the line directly.

If you damage an underground cable, stay away from it. Even if you are sure the power is off, remember it can be switched back on at any time without warning. Assume that it is live and dangerous, even if the underground cable is severed and laying on the ground. Do not approach the damage until given the go-ahead to do so by a representative of the electricity network operator.