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Network Rail Safety Bulletin

Workers suffer electric shock from 11kV overhead cables

For the attention of: All Network Rail staff, principal contractors, designers and contractors who are involved in the design and planning and those working in the vicinity of electrical equipment

Background:

On Monday 26 January 2015 two operatives were involved in the installation of a metal lighting column, which was being lifted into place with an excavator. The 8m column was supported in a vertical position by the excavator whilst one of the operatives guided it into a pre-installed ground spigot.

As the column was manoeuvred into position the top of the column came into contact with energised third party 11kV overhead cables. The operative guiding the column received an electric shock, suffering serious burns to the knees, one hand and their neck. The second operative also received an electric shock when they pulled the operative away from the lighting column. The picture below shows the column continuing to arc after the event. The work was part of constructing a new Rail Operating Centre at Basingstoke and away from the operational railway.

Our safety commitments say:

We will design, construct, inspect, operate and maintain the railway to keep everyone safe.

We will plan work to ensure that it can be done safely.

Our lifesaving rules say:



Always be sure the required plans and permits are in place, before you start a job or go on or near the line.



While we are investigating the causes of the incident, please take the time to consider the following and discuss in your teams:

- Do you have the ability to influence the design of assets with similar risks? If so how can you make sure that we have identified all site risks and taken steps to eliminate them, or if not possible to have suitably controlled them?
- Prior to work commencing work on site how do you check to make sure that all electrical risks are identified and that the appropriate control measures are in place?
- How can you use HSE Guidance Note GS6 [Avoiding danger from overhead power lines](#) and the Energy Networks Association [Look Out - Look Up](#) booklet to improve our risk management?