



Contact with OLE during vegetation removal (revised)

Issued to: **All Network Rail line managers, safety professionals and accredited contractors**

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Location: Ipswich Delivery Unit

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Overview

On the 1st June 2022, a team consisting of Off-Track and OLE staff from Ipswich Delivery Unit attended site at Arlesford to clear vegetation that was overhanging the Return Conductor. The team had a Safe Work Pack (SWP) to cover the work and upon inspection by the OLE team, it was determined that an 'OLE switch off' (not an earthed isolation) would be required, because the vegetation was in close proximity to LIVE OLE.

An 'OLE switch off' was taken by the Nominated Person and the Off-Track team proceeded to clear the overhanging branches. Whilst works were proceeding one of the branches fell onto the OLE which resulted in two of the Off-Track team receiving an electric shock.

It was then identified that the incorrect electrical section for the 'OLE switch off' had been requested, therefore the OLE in the area of works was LIVE. Approved insulated tools were not being used. The two employees attended A&E as a precaution and both did not sustained any injuries.

Immediate action required

- If the trimming or felling of trees is required near to the OLE, it shall be carried out in such a manner that it is not possible for debris to fall or be projected within 2.75m of live OLE or live pantographs and other roof mounted electrical equipment on trains.
- Before commencing any vegetation work the proposed works shall be subject to an electrical risk assessment.
- Lines should be isolated and earthed under an Overhead Line Permit (Form C) prior to work commencing where there is a risk of debris from vegetation clearance falling within 2.75m of live OLE (including Return Conductors).
- The E&PME must authorise an electrical risk assessment for vegetation removal that is less than 2.75m but more than 600mm from live equipment. Specific mitigations should be in place for such work which may include the use of OLE trained staff and insulated tools.
- An OLE switch off alone does not constitute an isolation and the OLE shall be treated as live. A switch off of the OLE shall only be permitted when identified as a control measure in a documented risk assessment or in the relevant TRCS.
- The vegetation clearance activity is detailed in the Task Risk Control Sheets (TRCS) NR/L3/MTC/RCS0216/OLE09 and GA21.
- Lineside vegetation shall be managed and controlled in accordance with NR/L2/OTK/5201.
- Any vegetation work shall be preceded by environmental checks in accordance with NR/L2/ENV/122
- If you do not feel that you have a safe system of work in place, you should use the Worksafe procedure.