

Failure of small core (16mm diameter) WT Henley Polymeric Insulator

Issued to: **DEAMs, Directors of Safety, Capital Delivery Directors and accredited contractors**

Ref: Local Safety Advice NRA21-02

Date of issue: 30/07/2021

Location: Chiltern Green, East Midlands

Contact: [Sultan Parker](#), Principal Engineer



Overview

On the 4th July 2021 an OLE insulator parted at Harpenden (Chiltern Green on East Midlands Route). OLE Maintenance staff were adjusting the balance weight pulley wheel separation and had applied lifting equipment "a rig" around the compensating plate between the anchor tail wire and the contact/catenary conductors.

When they released the tension after completion of works, they heard a 'cracking' sound coming from the existing balance weight small core (16mm diameter) polymeric insulator in the tail wire. Realising something was wrong, the OLE staff moved clear and the polymeric insulator then parted, causing the balance weight stack to descend to the ground releasing the OLE tensions.

Immediate action required

- Small core (16mm diameter) WT Henley insulators Catalogue number 91/012574, manufacturer reference 56145-56 are NOT FOR FUTURE USE. The larger core (31.5mm) WT Henley insulator Catalogue number 91/010050, manufacturer reference 56146-65 shall be used.
- Check and quarantine ALL small core (16mm diameter) WT Henley insulators 91/012574 from Stores.
- The WT Henley insulator Catalogue number 091/012573 manufacturer reference 56145-8 which are NOT installed in the line are also to be quarantined.
- Where 16mm core diameter insulators are already installed in the line (e.g. in balance weight tail wires) these insulators shall be replaced with the 31.5mm core diameter version.
- Where a 16mm core diameter insulator is found as part of a balance weight assembly it shall be replaced prior to performing any work on the wire run. Staff shall be cautious when applying the Rig (not to introduce any shock loading into the insulator).
- OLE staff are also reminded of previous Infrastructure Group Safety Bulletins (IGS) 266 and 276 relating to Double Clevis '808' components. In particular the requirements to inspect such components prior to applying lifting equipment "rigging" on balance weight or tensioning assemblies.
- The Safe Work Pack shall include hazard control measures to mitigate the risk of failure of such components during replacement.