

Unidentified Electricity Cable Guide

Understanding what to do when an unidentified cable is found in the ground.

Background:

UK Power Networks, on occasion, are called to incidents involving damage to electrical cables by third parties where there have been injuries sustained as a result of coming in to contact with Live conductors or exposed to the risk of harm. Exposure to any live conductors presents a significant risk from potentially fatal electric shocks and burns.

This, added to work on developments being interrupted through the discovery of unidentified cables that may not be shown on cable drawings, or in locations that were not expected, and UK Power Networks' commitment to Safety, led to the publication of this guide.

Introduction:

When a cable, not believed to be owned by UK Power Networks, is found and it is causing an obstruction, it may require diverting or removing, however, the first step on discovering an unidentified cable [not shown on any cable records] is to determine the asset owner.

Once all avenues of investigation have been exhausted to identify the asset owner, and where the unidentified cable is considered to be in the way of development, UK Power Networks will assist in the identification of the cable and where appropriate will provide a quotation to divert the cable.

The approved cable identification procedures must be followed to see if it is an HV cable, LV cable, Pilot cable, or a communications cable.

If the approved cable identification provides no result then the cable may be:

- an abandoned cable,
- an unrecorded idle cable, or
- the property of another party.

There are generally two scenarios where the exposure of an unidentified cable becomes an issue:

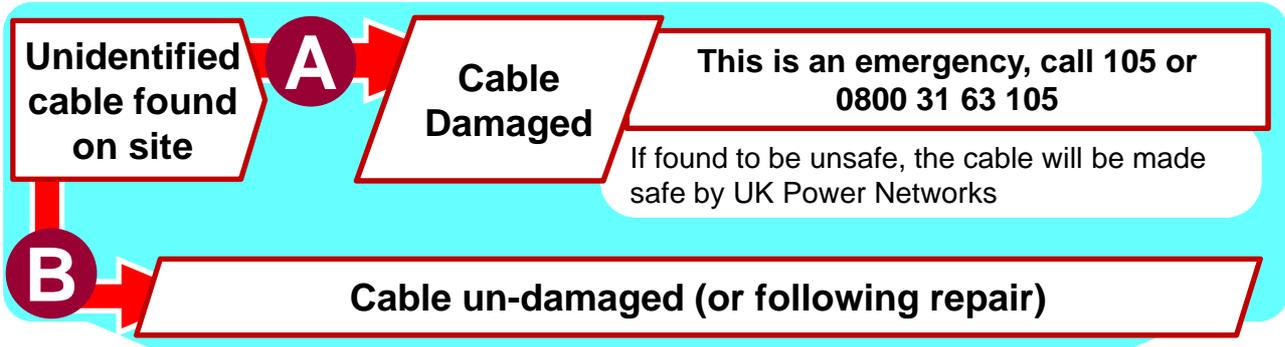
Scenario (A)

A third party is undertaking a demolition and has exposed and damaged an electrical cable

Scenario (B)

A third party has discovered an electrical cable which is not shown on the cable records and may be preventing any further site development

IMPORTANT - In all instances, when working in locations where there is potential for historic assets to be present, safe working practices must be adhered to in accordance with HSE Guidelines. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg47.htm>



- Step 1** Find out who the cable belongs to. It is the third party's responsibility to try to ascertain ownership. This will require contacting all possible owners of the cable and obtaining a written reply confirming or denying ownership.
- Possible asset owners include; Gas company, Water company. British Telecommunications plc, Cable communications company for area, Appropriate rail operators such as Network Rail, London Underground Limited or tramway operators. Also, National Grid Company. Independent Distribution Network Operators (IDNO), Local Authority (public lighting). Highways Authority (traffic monitoring and control).
 [This is not an exhaustive list]
 The third party must make all reasonable efforts to contact all possible owners of the unidentified cable.
- Step 2** If the cable owner is identified, liaise with them direct to divert or remove the cable.
- or
- Step 3** If no other party claims ownership of the cable, you may request that UK Power Networks assist in the removal / diversion of the cable. A charge will apply for this work.
If a Connections Project – Contact the designer for advice / or contact UK Power Networks General Enquiries team on 08000 294 285
- Step 4** A written request for the work to take place, and a declaration, will be required; accepting liability and indemnifying UK Power Networks from any claims which may arise. A template form can be supplied by the UK Power Networks Field Engineer, for completion when required.
- Step 5** If the cable has markings that show it to be a low voltage cable, using approved procedures, UK Power Networks will open and test the cable. If the cable could be a HV cable, a more detailed procedure will be undertaken to ascertain if it is Live or Dead.
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| Step 6 | If LIVE, then further investigation will be required, e.g. by excavation, signal injection and tracing, etc. then a diversion quote can be provided. | If DEAD, using appropriate working techniques, the cable cores can be cut and made safe. The site representative / developer will need to decide if the cable can remain in situ. |
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Note: For further guidance and advice, please contact UK Power Networks [Designer or Field Engineer]