

Electricity Industry National Health and Safety Advisory Committee (HESAC) Update

September 2022



Introduction

The National HESAC last met on 29th September 2022 to discuss both Electricity Industry Health and Safety issues. This briefing summarises the key issues discussed.

A summary includes:

- Latest developments regarding COVID-19 – A meeting in preparation for Winter readiness will be canvassed in Late October/Early November
- Developments from ongoing work at industry level looking at Occupational ill Health (Fatigue and Stress) and Culture in relation to the Powering Improvement Themes.
- Rise in public safety related concerns including: increased violence towards staff, rise in energy theft incidents and in contrast public safety incidents and concerns with increased risks from poor practice. It is believed the issue will be exacerbated by increased by energy crisis.
- Accident and Incident notification and sharing of guidance and information.

Key Issues Discussed

COVID 19

- It was felt that cases had significantly decreased however there was a fear that there is a potential for an increase during the following months leading up to winter.
- Companies encouraged to promote Flu and COVID-19 vaccinations and provide wherever possible and consider potential impacts for maintaining resource for critical functions.
- Companies continue to cautiously reduce the number of covid controls and measures in place whilst maintain certain measures that support new working such as hybrid style office working and meetings. Companies encouraged to ensure measures are in place to suitably ensure sustain controls and systems are adopted and maintained to ensure the health and safety of employees. Meeting to be held Late October / Early November of HESAC Covid-19.

Powering Improvement

- ENA welcomes feedback that can be fed in to the [PI corporate memory section](#) of its website to support further sharing of industry knowledge and learning points from historic safety incidents. Staff encouraged to promote corporate memory through regular engagements.
- Safety and Health Data and case study information is being collated and the high level statistics will be

monitored via ENA Occupational health committee and focus areas will continue to be looked at collectively

- Powering Improvement launches its 2022/2023 Delivery Plan for the theme of 'Promoting Positive Health and Safety Culture'. The Powering Improvement Steering Group (PISG) and a new Culture Subgroup will be responsible for delivering the outputs within it. A Workshop was held on 6th September and a report has been issued post event and is available as an appendix.

Occupational Health

- Building on the good progress on safety, Companies and Trade Unions are committed to addressing the health issues that generate the vast majority of sickness absence. The three priority issues are:
- Mental health; Musculoskeletal disorders; and Management of fatigue.
- A Healthy Workplaces Framework has been devised by ENAs Occupational Health Committee which documents the priorities and timeline of commitments over the coming years.
- A data survey questionnaire has been circulated to collate companies' current health reporting capabilities so that a collective industry template can be developed for future internal reporting. A benchmarking exercise is currently taking place to gather data to be showcased for 2020 and 2021 in the upcoming Powering Improvement SHE Review. This

will also feature industry safety data.

- A workshop was held on 7th September with a focus on Fatigue. A presentation delivered by Hull University is available as an appendix.

Threats and Violence

- Companies and TUs raised concerns over growing numbers of violence or threats made towards staff working in operational settings. Various guidance and communications have been issued by companies and TUs and there was a strong encouragement for a collective focus on maintaining and adopting a zero-tolerance approach to dealing with this type of behaviour. All employees would be encouraged to follow process and remove themselves out of any situation where they feel threatened or experience violence

Energy Theft

- Energy Crisis and other factors were said to be a contributory factor to member of public incidents and issues for electricity companies where cases of illegal tampering appears to be increasing drastically. ENA is looking to do some proactive communications activity to highlight the dangers associated in hope to deter the issue. TUs and Energy UK are looking to support collective campaigns.

PI SHE Bulletins (click to expand)



ASSESSING CLEARANCES WHEN REMOVING OR INSERTING FUSES

OVERVIEW

Following an incident where a 'Flashover' occurred as a 3rd party Meter Operator was removing fuses from a cut-out, this Bulletin is to remind staff who operate equipment to assess all clearances before inserting or replacing fuses.

DETAIL

A Meter Operator was on site to de-energise for internal works and during the removal of the fuse it made contact with the panel above causing a flashover. This was due to the panel above the fuses being fitted flush against the cut-out and overhanging the fuses. As the fuse was withdrawn the top of the fuse contacted the panel. Fortunately, there were no injuries.

Although this work was not undertaken by DNO employees, it is appropriate to highlight this incident to electricity industry staff who remove and insert fuses in their operational roles.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

- Assess clearances before removing or inserting fuses and if in doubt, carry out as a Dead operation; and
- Report any hazardous cut-out and switchgear configurations via appropriate reporting procedure.



Scissor lift incident

At approximately 08:00 on the 1st June 2022 at a Transmission Converter Station there was a catastrophic failure of a scissor lift mobile elevated work platform (MEWP). There were 4 operatives in the MEWP at the time of the incident and had ascended to a height of about 5m. Without any indication the hydraulics suddenly failed, and the MEWP platform fell under gravity to rest on the main body. Two of the operatives were shaken but had no injuries, one had potential rib injuries and the other damage to his knee. Both were taken to hospital via ambulance for further assessment.



The type of MEWP involved is a HOLLAND LIFT model type: HOL-M250DL27, a technical investigation is underway as well as a full investigation into this serious incident. Findings from both will be analysed and lesson learnt communicated.

Immediate actions for project and site managers are: -

- All MEWPs of this type and manufacturer are to be removed from service until a formal inspection has been performed by a competent person in accordance with manufacturers requirements.
- Ensure all MEWPs have been thoroughly examined within the past 6 months and certification is in date
- Ensure all daily checks are carried out and personnel understand the importance of them



Use of Seat Belts

Wearing a seat belt reduces the chances of being injured in a vehicle or mobile heavy equipment accident. Drivers have been killed when vehicles fitted with restraints overturned, because they were not wearing the safety belt provided.

Unfortunately, at a number of work locations, it has been found that an increasing number of contractor operatives choose not to wear lap belts and even wilfully bypass safety systems. This is increasing their risk of serious injury or death should the machine overturn.

HSE statistics clearly evidence that in terms of the number of incidents that resulted in either a fatality or a major injury "trapped by something collapsing/overturns" category is one of the most likely types of accident involving a fatality.

As contracting companies are legal employers of their own staff, they have a legal duty to make sure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that their workers' health and safety is not put at risk while carrying out work

Contractors are required to do more at site level to monitor and enforce the wearing of seat belts and check they have suitable arrangements in place to maintain this. Day to day control of any work being undertaken is fundamental

Site management of any level must influence this practice by actively monitoring and strongly enforcing seat belt wearing. Clients have a duty to check their contractors and must promptly challenge any situation where this is identified and in parallel raise the issue with the contractor's management

Recommendations and action points

- Discuss the importance of and the expectations/requirements for seat belt use at all regular contractor interfaces, audits, site visits, workplace inspections and behavioural safety tours
- Promote expectations of the highest standards of Health Safety during the preparation and execution of all work at any location associated with the Clients activities/works
- Non compliances should be recorded (e.g. a Near Miss or an Audit Inspection finding) and noted within Health Safety Contractor performance evaluations (e.g. at regular review and post contract meetings).



Powering your safety and wellbeing: staying safe in the heat

When we're packing to go on a sun holiday abroad, one of the first things in the suitcase is the sun cream and sun protection. But, do you apply the same level of precaution when you're out in the sun in the UK?

When you're in the outdoors, be it for work or pleasure, the effects of the weather in the UK environment could have a serious impact on your health. As always, our priority is to ensure each and every colleague goes home safe at the end of the day.

Below are a few tips on staying safe and healthy whilst working in the sun and heat – (most of which can be applied if you're having a BBQ in the back garden too!):

Keep Hydrated. Increase your water intake and eat food with high-water content, such as fruit and salads. Not drinking enough water is bad for your health all year long, but it is a bigger problem during the summer when our bodies are losing more water than usual, and if we don't keep drinking, we can easily become dehydrated which can make you feel unwell. Try and take a drink of water every 15 minutes where possible.

Wear a hat that covers your neck and, if possible, your ears. The back of your neck is particularly vulnerable. The blood vessels pass very close to the surface of your skin at this point. This makes the blood being carried to your brain warmer and can cause serious problems. This is a huge factor in heat stroke. If you can, keep your neck covered. A hat with the peak facing backwards, a thin hooded top or even turning your collar up, can all help to give your neck a break.

Remove personal protective equipment when resting. Although PPE is there for your safety and you should never work without it, it can be extremely hot to work in it when the temperatures rise. Ensure that when you're resting or when you're on a break to remove your outer layers of PPE which will help reduce your body temperature.

Protect your skin. Too much sunlight is harmful to your skin. It can cause skin damage including sunburn, blistering and skin ageing and in the long term can lead to an increased risk of skin cancer. Ensure you're wearing a good sun cream with a high SPF (at least 15) which protects against both UVA and UVB Rays, by doing this you can protect your skin and reduce the risk of future health problems.

Wear your sunglasses. We often forget that the same harmful rays from the sun that can damage our skin can also damage our eyes. Most health advisors recommend you should wear sunglasses for the majority of the day but especially between 10am and 4pm as this is when the sun's rays are strongest and the eyes most vulnerable to damage.

ENA Progress Update

Training & Competence

- The ENA Training and Competency Committee considered the findings and looked at how best to deliver the necessary refresher training initiatives suggested in the 2019 HSL report and seek to develop outputs formed from discussions at powering improvement workshops held on human and organisational factors to develop industry best practice guidance. A series of profile parameters were agreed covering SAP definition, training requirements, operational competence, organisational competence, and behavioural competence. The latter was then expanded to include wider managerial skills.
- ENA are also looking at the work of the various UK telecom providers (TPs) and their required skills and competence to work on or associated with DNO LV poles. This work may lead to the introduction of a national accreditation scheme for TPs.
- ENA is considering its role in future skills development in support of the Green Economy and Net Zero strategies as part of wider industry work (EU Skills and NSAP) in this area. A brief has been issued to the ENA Board for consideration of dedicated ENA work and resource to help shape and influence the green skills agenda and more effectively engage with Government and key stakeholders

PCB Cohort Group

- The PCB Cohort Group continue to assess the options for accelerating the replacement of such assets and

reducing the industry cohort register. To date with the last run in July the model has identified out of a total population of 198,457 pole mounted transformers that 73,641 are not contaminated, a further 33,976 that are out of scope (i.e. no longer connected to network, inaccurate records or post 1987 assets) and 22,751 that are possibly contaminated. 68,089 remain unknown and work continues to identify if these remaining transformers are clean or contaminated. Total deferred savings as a result of this work is in the region of £530million.

Public Safety

- ENAs Public Safety Committee is hosting a Public Safety Stakeholder event on 1st November 2022 in London to promote public safety advice to key influential third parties and stakeholders across the UK to remind of the dangers of underground utility assets and to seek support and guidance on how to improve the promoting of best practice safe digging principles.
- Through ENAs Communications Team, a campaign is looking to be launched in early October in line with ENAs Winter Readiness Campaign on promoting the dangers of interfering wilfully with the electricity network.
- Fatigue Management Task Force – ENA's SHE Committee have provisionally approved to support the HSE's Science and Research Division proposed project into Occupational Fatigue. The project was due to start in April 2022 but has been delayed due to

funding issues. That said, Panos Stavrakakis of HSE's Science and Research Division has extended an invitation to ENA to engage with the companies moving forward to seek where support and guidance can assist and potential for further engagement across the utility sector.

Fatigue

- ENAs Task Force continue to meet on a quarterly basis and joined the OHC on 7th September where Hull University Colleagues were invited to present on work taking place outside the sector, highlighting a variety of mitigation techniques to be considered. The FMTF are in the process of developing a tool kit which will be collectively delivered by the companies with the support of external experts and stakeholders into the risk of fatigue. The aspiration is for a toolkit or collective repository to provide support and guidance which will look into ways to proactively mitigate the risk and take pre-emptive action and reactively monitor the risk and enhance investigative practices into root cause.

Trade Union Update

In the last quarter the four trade unions have concentrated on the following four activities so we can identify priorities, contribute to joint work on health and safety, communicate our work to members and increase the capability of safety reps. By ensuring that we are effective, we can work better to maintain the high standards of safety across the sector.

- i. National coordination of health and safety;
 - ii. Developing key areas of activity;
 - iii. Communication
 - iv. Training of reps.
- Our aim has been to ensure that safety reps feel better connected and equipped to contribute to the national work of the unions and to participate in initiatives such as Powering Improvement. One of the consequences of the joint work on COVID has been a recognition of the value of national joint work to inform local safety programmes and a desire to share experience.

National safety strategy

- As the sector has opened up following the COVID pandemic, the four unions have revitalised their energy committees' work on health and safety to develop initiatives with employers and to increase the capacity of safety reps. The experience of working online during COVID has made it easier to share experience and engage more reps: for example, Prospect next month will promote a wider energy

safety committee open to reps from all energy sector companies to share best practice and to better inform our input into programmes such as Powering Improvement

Key areas of activity

- We shall pick this up in the rest of the agenda. Given our joint ownership of Powering Improvement, we have focussed on areas such as fatigue management where the unions have worked with the University of Hull and shared the outputs through Powering Improvement.

Communication

- All four unions have reviewed communication following COVID and have adapted our communication so it is better targeted. As part of this process and in response to feedback from reps, targeted safety bulletins have been developed.

Training

- Given the disruption caused by COVID, there has been higher than usual turnover of safety reps across the unions as a whole. Moreover the process of regenerating our safety rep networks now recognises the potential reach of online training. Therefore union training has been developed that can be delivered online and it focuses on the following areas:

- i. Introduction to the role of the safety rep;
- ii. Safety inspections;

iii. Safety investigations;

iv. Communication

- This work is intended to supplement not substitute for joint training with ENA members.
- We believe that work in these four areas will enable to maintain the high standards of joint working demonstrated so far in Powering Improvement: by better engagement of safety reps and improving their skills, then we can increase the quality and impact of the various Powering Improvement initiatives.

Conclusion

We hope that this is a useful overview of the issues considered by national HESAC and welcome feedback from local Committees, both on the detail of local initiatives and on any additional items that you believe we should address.

For further information on the items within this briefing, a full set of minutes of the meeting held 29th September can be found on the Powering Improvement website - www.poweringimprovement.org/national-hesac/

We welcome feedback on these points.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of National HESAC is TBC.

Jamie Reeve

Secretary to National HESAC

Energy Networks Association