

Surface Cable Damage

- Electrical cable snagged by reform mower during grass cutting operation, 16 April 2020 at the Barley Mow junction A43/A421
 - Electrical asset knockdown in same location on 28 June 2017 – made safe at that time (isolating and marking the location with a traffic cone)
 - Multiple grass cutting visits between June 2017 and April 2020 – no reported issues
 - A walkover on this occasion was undertaken and this is the same for all cuts – the cable was not observed, but sign frames were discovered and removed from site



Findings

Cause areas

Findings

Immediate Cause	Operators did not see any obstruction Cable was within the cut height of the mower
Underlying Causes	The cone used to mark the cable had been removed / damaged The passage of time between the knockdown and the incident may have permitted the cable to deviate from initial position, to be at a higher elevation
Root Causes	A cable was left on the surface where it could be compromised by grass cutting operations Standard operating practices at the time permitted an insecure method of highlighting the cable, albeit they did include the practice of electrically isolating the cable from the supply The grass cutting team were not advised of the potential of a cable No immediate permanent repair scheduled on the back of the temporary 'make safe' visit

Effective barriers, good practice

The attending electrical crew isolated the cable at source, but left it ready for an imminent re-instatement – i.e. at the surface, marked with a traffic cone. This act prevented any later disturbance of the cable from causing any harm.

Grass cutting teams visually check the area, they located discarded sign frames, but missed the cable in the grass.

Working practice of the electrical teams has been enhanced by using more robust temporary bollards to highlight the hazard better. The bollard as shown may be placed provided with the directional arrow when replacing a permanent bollard, or plain yellow for a lighting column.

