

Safety Flash Report

IP Southern Safety Flash Report 16-54 dated 28 Sep 16

Initial learning from electrical flash-over while erecting Vortok fencing



An electrical incident occurred when a team was erecting Vortok fencing under a line block using conductor rail shields for protection from the conductor rail. An insulated shovel came into contact with both the live conductor rail and the running rail causing a short-circuit and an electrical flash-over.

The insulation on the shovel protected the operative from electrocution. Initial reports are that the incident was caused by a slippage but this is still under investigation.

The supplier has stopped this type of activity around the conductor rail until a full review of the incident has taken place. In the meantime, consider reviewing any activity you are undertaking around conductor rails as follows:

- ***Isolation of the conductor rail should be sought in the first instance.*** The electricity at Work Regulations only permits work on or around live conductors when it is unreasonable for it to be dead. We need to challenge whether we have reasonable cause for working on conductor rails that are not dead
- If all other avenues have been exhausted, and it is deemed reasonable for work to take place on or around a live conductor rail, then remember the following:
 - Ensure that the shroud is in a suitable, safe and useable condition and fully covers the third rail leaving no gaps for potential contact points
 - Ensure rubber flaps on the underside of shrouds are sitting correctly on installation
 - Only use insulated tools and equipment and check that the insulating material is not worn and is in a safe useable condition.



The insulated shovel used