

Safety Alert

Reporting a Utility Strike on Airsweb

15 October 2020

Background information

Home safe and well, means getting home for the people we love and for the things that we love doing. In Highways England and throughout our supply chain this matters more than anything else.

Previously issued safety alerts ([HEi151 - issued April 2020](#)) show that the care and attention we all expect, is not being afforded when working near utilities.

Incident reporting and data integrity are a key part of becoming the learning organisation we want to become. To ensure our industry continues to learn and become leaders of safety we need to accurately record Incidents in order for us to evolve.

Following a review of our Utility Strike data, Highways England has identified significant discrepancies with how Utility Strikes are recorded on Airsweb. The risks relating to utility strikes, can be severe and we need your commitment to:

- Accurately report all incidents - This will allow us to identify and share lessons learnt. These lessons allow us to put appropriate actions in place, to prevent repeatable incidents occurring.
- Ensure the correct categorisation of utility strikes - This provides us all with the facts, and valuable, honest learning.

- Follow the [Common Intent document](#) published by the Supply Chain Safety Leadership group earlier this year and make certain your teams are following the standard.

The extract below, (from [GG128](#)), is a simple description of what constitutes a Utility Strike.

Please take the time now to remind yourself of these requirements we have set out.

Utility Strikes reporting shall include the unintentional or disturbance of a live or redundant cable, pipe or duct above or below ground including those for:

- Electrical supply
 - Gas supply
 - Water supply
 - Surface water sewerage or land drainage
 - Foul sewerage
 - Traffic signalling or enforcement
 - Traffic signing
 - CCTV or traffic data
 - Telephony (mobile and hard-wired)
 - Other data transmission
- This requirement, makes no differentiation, if the utility is grazed, or severed; if it's a duct or a pipe, or if it's redundant or dead; we need you to record these according to our definition, (as detailed above and in GG128) so we can accurately learn from these incidents.

Reporting a Utility Strike on Airsweb – continued.

- For your clarity, the diagram below details the definitions for each Event Type & Event Subtype, when reporting a Utility Strike, onto Airsweb.

Event Type	Definition	Event Subtype	Definition
Infrastructure Asset	Utility strikes reporting includes the unintentional damage or disturbance of a live or redundant cable, pipe or duct above or below ground.	Service Strike	A strike where there was no credible threat to cause harm
		RIDDOR Dangerous Occurrence	A strike which reasonably may have resulted in harm
Near Miss	An activity has been undertaken but halted before a utility strike occurs	High Potential (4 types)	No strike, reasonably may have resulted in harm
Undesired Circumstance	An activity was halted before it commenced due to reasonable risk of a utility strike	Minor or low potential impact	No strike, no credible threat to cause harm
		Observation	A safety system was tested and succeeded
		Pro-active Intervention	Human intervention

- The most common examples where Utility Strikes are miss-reported onto Airsweb are:
 - The cable was redundant and therefore the incident was recorded as a Near Miss
 - The cable was grazed and not broken, therefore it was recorded as a Near Miss
- A step by step guide on ‘how to record a Service/Utility Strike onto Airsweb’ guidance document has been added to the existing Airsweb guidance library. This can be found [here](#)
- When recording an incident or completing the ‘Investigator sign-off’ stage on an Airsweb record, please ensure all Utility Strikes are accurately reported using the most appropriate Event Type/Event Subtype. It is these categories (as detailed above) that allow us to understand the severity of the incident, and to take the appropriate learning action.
- A letter to accompany this Safety Alert is also being sent directly to each Supply Chain Partner, for further sharing.