Safety Notice

Health and Safety Warning Notice 98/17

Electrical Distribution
Cable location devices - radio interference.

SUBJECT CONTACT POINT:
P D Meakin
AD Industrial Processes Group
Standards
Technical Standards Directorate
Sutton Coldfield Mil Ext 2169
Direct Dialling 0121 311 2169

NOTICE AUTHORISED BY:
C Cain
Director Technical

Date:

DEFENCE ESTATE ORGANISATION
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
Safety Notice 98/17

Electrical Distribution Cable
location devices - radio interference

INTRODUCTION

1. THE CONTENTS OF THIS NOTICE ARE TO SECURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE
   HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK ETC ACT 1974.

2. This Notice is for the attention of Commanding Officers, Chief Executives, Heads of
   Establishment, Property Managers, Defence Lands Agents, Establishment Works
   Consultants (EWCs), Works Services Managers (WSMs), Authorising Engineers,
   Authorised Persons and Contractors, involved in works for MOD.

3. This Notice is to be read by all persons involved with any works associated with the
   equipment that is the subject of this Notice. No work involving expenditure on an
   MOD account is to be carried out without authority from the Property Manager or
   the appropriate MOD officer for that location or facility.

4. Any work required as a result of this Safety Notice must be carried out
   in accordance with MOD Safety Rules and Procedures as applicable.

5. The Authorising Engineer/responsible person, is to notify the Property Manager:
   of the location of any equipment which exists on the establishment and is
   subject to this notice as soon as it has been identified;

   and

   when the relevant modifications are completed, that the appropriate remedial
   action has been carried out.

6. Defects are to be immediately reported to the Property Manager and the applicable
   Authorising Engineer who must impose appropriate operating restrictions on the
   equipment that is the subject of this Notice, until remedial action is completed.

7. For MOD Establishments occupied by United States Visiting Forces (USVF), the
   responsibilities of Property Manager, EWC and WSM are jointly held by the USVF
   and DEO(USF). At base level this jointly managed organisation is to take
   appropriate action to implement the contents of this Safety Notice. Where this
   Notice contains procedures which differ significantly from USVF practice, a
   DEO(USF) Code of Practice section will be issued.

REQUIREMENT

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8. ACTION ADDRESSEES ARE TO ENSURE THAT THIS INFORMATION IS PASSED TO THEIR PROPERTY MANAGERS OR OTHER RESPONSIBLE OFFICERS WITHOUT DELAY

9. Persons responsible for tracing underground services, and electricity distribution cables in particular, are to check the operating frequency of their detection devices.

10. Detection devices operating at, or near (+ 20%), 22 KHz are to be used with extreme caution on the MOD Estate, since it is possible for these devices to give a false indication that the ground is clear when this is not the case.

RECOMMENDATION

11. Co-ordinating Authorising Engineers are advised to remind Authorised Persons (Electrical) of the clauses in section 8 of SRP01 regarding cable identification. The appropriate text in clause 8.19 reads “Identifying a cable by passing an electrical signal along it is not in itself a reliable means of identification since cables running alongside are inductively coupled and may give false identification.”

BACKGROUND

12. Reports have been received of two near misses when cable detection devices failed to detect high voltage electricity distribution cables. The problem has been traced to cable detectors using 22 KHz (approx) signals to locate these cables. Transmission from the MOD’s licensed transmitter at Rugby, on the correct frequency of 22.1 KHz, interfered with the cable detectors, causing them to give false readings.

13. We have been advised that the Department of Trade and Industry has told the manufacturers of the system concerned to alter their equipment. However, it would appear that the message has not yet been acted upon.

END OF SAFETY NOTICE