

Interventions Working Group - Phenolic Cut Out Discussion

19 May 2022 at 13:00

Teleconference on Teams

Attendees	Company
Atif Haq [AH]	SSEN
Boz Laird-Clowes [BLC]	BEIS
Callum Sheen [CS]	EON
Christopher Sterling [CSt]	SSEN
Craig Short [CSh]	UKPN
David Antcliff [DA]	Utilita
Gary Hesketh [GH]	Ovo Energy
Geoff Huckerby [GHu]	Power Data Associates
Ian Osborne [IO]	EDF
James Flynn [JF]	British Gas
Jie Dai [JD]	SSEN
Kevin Downie [KD]	Scottish Power
Paul Morris [PM]	UKPN
Philip Howell [PH]	Electricity North West
Richard Brady [RB]	WPD
Richard Cockerill [RC]	Ovo Energy
Richard Hill [RH]	British Gas
William McKay [WM]	SSEN
Secretariat	
Richard Colwill [RCo] (Chair)	ElectraLink

1. Administration

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting.
- 1.2 The Chair reminded members to act in accordance with the terms set out in the DCUSA “Competition Law Guidance” for the duration of the meeting.

2. Phenolic Cut Out Incidents Overview

- 2.1 The Chair advised that following on from conversations at previous IWG meetings and a number of other industry forums, it was agreed at the May IWG to hold a workshop to develop a guidance document regarding three recent safety incidents associated with phenolic electricity cut-outs.
- 2.2 The Chair asked representatives from the affected Parties to provide updates on their investigations into the incidents.
- 2.3 RB advised that WPD have not been able to locate the cut out, however they have been able to identify some similar cut outs. RB noted that from investigating the area in which the incident took place, they have discovered that all other houses in the street have internal meters, however that the affected meter had been moved to an outside meter box due to an extension.
- 2.4 RB noted that they are looking to access the other properties on the street to replace and investigate the cut outs. RB highlighted that the recent incidents seem to have been linked to one make/model of cut out, however due to other past incidents also being linked to phenolic cut outs, they will endeavour to replace any identified.
- 2.5 RB outlined that they have also completed a risk assessment to investigate how many of these cut outs there are likely to be on the network and how often they will encounter them.
- 2.6 RB noted that they feel the risk is low based on estimates of how many are still on the network, and highlighted that if they can identify hot spots, they can work to replace them. RB clarified that they do not want everyone to stop working on black cut outs, and therefore support the industry bulletin to raise awareness of the specific cut out type and extra necessary safety precautions.
- 2.7 WM advised that SSEN are still carrying out their forensic investigation and as such, are not yet able to share any conclusions. WM noted that they are keen to assist with any information going out to Meter Operators and highlighted that they have been working closely with another DNO that has done significant work on these types of cut out.
- 2.8 RC highlighted that from the pictures of the incidents, it seemed as though the cables were either being removed or had already been removed from the cut out and suggested that perhaps consideration needs to be given to wearing PPE whilst replacing cables. One member noted that not all of the incidents occurred whilst someone was working on the meter and noted that

enhanced PPE should only be an interim measure whilst the root cause of the incidents is investigated.

- 2.9 PM highlighted that all of the cut outs have the same model number on the base and asked if the manufacturer had been identified and contacted. RB advised that they had contacted the manufacturer however that they did not have access to relevant historical records and were unsure how long the production run was. IO suggested that when similar safety issues had arisen in the past, the manufacturer has worked with the Parties involved to produce a risk assessment. RB agreed to contact the manufacturer again and ask for further information.
- 2.10 RC asked whether the three cut outs were the same, to which RH confirmed that the bases fitted to the meter board were all the same. The Chair highlighted that this will be a key point for the guidance document. The group agreed that the document needs to be specific to the type of cut out concerned and that usual procedure is followed on any other cut out types.
- 2.11 RB highlighted that environment is a key factor and whether the cut out is outside or exposed to damp conditions. WM noted that a number of factors need to be considered and that the whole picture will need to be considered during forensic investigations. RH advised that of the three effected cut outs, one was inside, one was semi inside, and one was outside.

3. What Guidance Currently Exists (i.e A19, C17 reporting)

- 3.1 Current guidance was discussed under agenda item 4.

4. Development of industry guidance note

- 4.1 The group discussed and agreed that increased safety procedures and additional PPE could be an interim measure to protect Meter Operatives, however that a solution is necessary to prevent future incidents.
- 4.2 IO asked whether the way these types of cut out are reported needs to be changed. RC noted that currently an A19 code is raised if a surface voltage is found on a plastic cut-out, and a C17 code is raised to report a black plastic cut out. The group agreed that once the forensic investigations have concluded, a decision can be made as to whether a new reporting code is required.
- 4.3 WM highlighted that surface voltage would only be found on specific points of the cut out so suggested that the interim guidance include testing the surface voltage of the specific points identified. The group agreed and noted that the guidance should outline that if any surface voltage is detected at these points, the Meter Operative should stop work and report this as an A19 code.
- 4.4 The group agreed that if no issues are identified on the cut out, work can continue and that a C17 code should be raised adding a comment to highlight the cut out type. The group also agreed for the guidance to include a PPE recommendation.
- 4.5 The Chair agreed to work with the affected DNOs and Suppliers to produce a first draft of the guidance document. This is included as **Attachment 1**.

- 4.6 The group agreed that once the document has been finalised, it should be issued via the Energy Networks Association (ENA) by the end of May.

5. Any Other Business

- 5.1 The Chair asked if there was any other business, to which nothing was raised.

6. Next Meeting

- 6.1 The next standard IWG meeting is scheduled to be held on 06 July 2022. The meeting will start at 10am.

Attachments

- Attachment 1 - BICC Phenolic Cut-out Issue ENA DCUSA_20.05.2022 v0.1