



4.02 – WORKING NEAR OVERHEAD AND UNDERGROUND ASSETS POLICY

1 INTRODUCTION

Damage to Norfolk Island Regional Council (the Council) overhead or underground pipe and cable assets can bring many serious risks to essential services, workers and the community.

2 POLICY OBJECTIVE

Steps must be taken to ensure that risks are eliminated as is reasonably practicable or reduced as much as possible.

This policy aims to ensure assistance and access to information on the location of all underground and/or overhead assets at their worksite(s). The priorities are to:

- promote safe digging practices;
- enable underground and overhead assets to be protected;
- reduce accidents and disruptions to services; and,
- assist in the protection of staff, contractors and volunteers.

3 POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to all Council work areas, staff, contractors and volunteers.

4 DEFINITIONS

Overhead Assets Including, but not limited to, power lines and telephone lines.

Underground Assets Including, but not limited to, power cables, telephone cables and sewer lines.

5 LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

- *Electricity Supply Act 1985 (NI)*
- *Roads Act 2001 (NI)*
- *Trees Act 1997 (NI)*
- *Telecommunications Act 1992 (NI)*
- *Environment Act 1990 (NI)*

6 IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Communication

This policy is to be made available to all staff via the intranet and a printed copy to employees without access to the intranet.

The responsible officer for this policy, the Manager Commercial Services, should issue periodic media releases to remind the community of responsibilities when working near overhead and underground Council assets.

6.2 Associated Documents

- Work, Health and Safety Policy
- Any policies and procedures relating to Asset Management

7 POLICY

1.1 Overhead Cables

If persons need to work in an area closer than 3 metres to the wires on a power pole, they must contact Norfolk Island Electricity and/or Norfolk Island Telecom for assistance and advice. No person should work near or under overhead power or telephone lines without a dedicated Council safety observer. All persons should be vigilant at all times when working near overhead powerlines.

Persons should be aware of ‘inattention blindness’ and the risks of forgetting about nearby hazards. Persons should know the exact height of equipment when it is fully raised or extended.

1.2 Underground Cables and Pipelines

Persons intending to undertake excavation works on all land are required to contact Norfolk Island Electricity, Norfolk Island Telecom and/or Health and Water, prior to commencement of digging to prevent damage and disruption to the Council pipe and cable networks which provides Norfolk Island with the essential services we use every day.

The procedure of ‘Dial Before You Dig’ or excavate, is designed to protect excavators, whether a backyard renovator, an individual tradesman or a professional excavator. The potential for injury, personal liability and even death exists. Obtaining accurate information about the work site significantly minimizes risks. This policy will ensure that excavators receive information about underground networks at the excavation site, within ten business days.

1.3 Lodgement of an Enquiry

Anyone wishing to excavate must lodge an enquiry form at least ten business days prior to the commencement of excavation. Enquires can be lodged by dialing:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| i. Team Leader Electricity | 22078 |
| ii. Team Leader Telecom | 0100 |
| iii. Health and Water Officer | 22609 |

1.4 Enquiry Response

Confirmation of location of the Council underground assets will be provided, free of charge, within ten business days. Applicants will be met on the proposed site. Site plans may be issued that clearly identify where the networks are located. Marks will be sprayed indicating location of assets.

If excavation work to be carried out involves an immediate or emergency type condition that makes it impractical to wait ten working days for a response, the above persons should be contacted as soon as possible prior to commencement of digging.

1.5 General Responsibility and Duty of Care

Excavators have a duty of care to locate underground services that are in the vicinity of the dig site, and then find and expose them by digging by hand before excavating near or around them.

The duty of care is to:

- protect workers and the public from serious injury due to the nature of an underground asset; and to,
- minimize the potential for damage and loss of services due to damage of the assets.

1.6 Damage and Accidents

Incidents do happen and the severity and resultant impact varies greatly.

The contractor is responsible for contacting the Council immediately if an asset is dug up or damaged in any way.

1.7 Penalties

The Council may not charge for callout or repairs if we are satisfied that all necessary steps were taken to prevent damage and we are immediately notified of accidental damage.

The costs of repairs for damage where the Council was not consulted prior to excavating or was not notified of damage could be charged along with a relevant penalty unit charge.

8 REVIEW AND VERSION CONTROL

Policy Number	4.02		Responsible Officer	Manager Commercial Services
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