

Target audience

All Workers and Contractors who plan, coordinate or undertake work with Mobile Plant near Sydney Trains Electrical equipment/infrastructure.

The Issue

During the period **January 2020** to **May 2021** there have been a number of incidents related to mobile plant striking and potentially damaging electrical infrastructure in the rail corridor. During a recent **WE48** possession there were **four (4)** incidents including an excavator coming into contact with overhead wire (OHW) at Hurlstone Park causing minor damage to OHW copper wire. It should be noted:

- Contact and Catenary wire is under considerable tension. If the plant breaks the wire, staff working in the vicinity will be exposed to the kinetic energy of the released wire.
- Damage to OHW can delay the restoration of the power outage impacting our customers and diverts resources away from their planned work potentially impacting reliability.

[SMS-06-GD-0268 Working around Electrical Equipment \(Railsafe\)](#) stipulates specific controls for the Safe Use of Mobile Plant around Electrical Equipment including the requirement for the use of a **Safety Observer** when:

- there is any risk of a person working near or potentially within the Safe Approach Distance (SAD) directly or by means of tools, equipment, materials or other objects they may be using or carrying during the work; or
- **the planned work activities could present an unacceptable risk of damage to electrical equipment and or infrastructure.** *Note: This still applies even when the electrical equipment and or infrastructure are isolated and or out of service.*

The **Safety Observer** shall:

- hold the applicable competency to perform the role (*Safe Electrical Approach for Cranes and Plant / UETTDRELO4A – Working safely near live electrical apparatus as a non-electrical worker*);
- understand their role is to ensure plant does not come within the safe approach distance of live electrical infrastructure and to prevent strike / damage to isolated electrical infrastructure;
- ensure the relevant controls including limiters, permits, safe work method statements are approved and in place prior to plant operation.

Also stipulated as a control, is the use of movement restriction devices or physical barriers as a separation control, such as mechanical stops/constraints, interlocking devices or control devices, to prevent movement of plant, equipment or persons into the minimum SAD.

What you must do

Please ensure the following actions are undertaken for the safe use of Mobile Plant around Electrical Equipment:

1. Refer to [SMS-06-GD-0268 \(Railsafe\)](#) for further instruction and information.
2. Ensure that one safety observer is appointed per item of mobile plant used around electrical equipment.
3. The safety observers shall ensure they have a line of sight, are able to fully focus their attention on the persons, plant, mobile plant, equipment or load.
4. Ensure the use of movement restriction devices as a separation control.

If you have any questions please talk to your Safety Representative or Line Manager.

Chadi Chalhoub
A/Executive Director SEQR