

# Awareness of subsea power cables and associated Channel Islands Electricity Grid fibre optics



Guernsey and Jersey import electricity from France via a network of subsea cables. The network is operated and managed by The Channel Islands Electricity Grid (CIEG). This leaflet is to provide mariners information to enable the avoidance of these cables.

## How could trawling damage cables?



Despite the extensive precautions taken by CIEG during the cable installation, cables do not always lay flat and straight on the seabed. Suspensions can occur even when a cable has been mechanically buried during installation, due to seabed movements or fishing operation where a cable has been snagged and lifted for example. The risk of fouling/damage to a cable is greater where a cable has become suspended

When a cable is repaired a new section of cable needs to be spliced in and a length of cable approximately five times the water depth will be laid on the seabed. Despite all appropriate precautions being taken, the repaired section will remain vulnerable to fouling or damage as the excess cable may form loops and stand proud of the seabed.

Even where the cable is buried below the seabed for its own protection, it can still be damaged by trawling equipment or by dredging, i.e. where a dredge penetrates the seabed on each drag, or if dredges have made successive passes over the same area.

Fishing activities may vary over time in areas where cables are present and cables may potentially become vulnerable as a result.

## What do I do if my equipment fouls a cable?



If you do foul a cable, make sure you safeguard your vessel and your crew, following emergency procedures recommended at [www.kis-orca.eu/subsea-cables](http://www.kis-orca.eu/subsea-cables).

It is extremely dangerous to attempt to bring on board any cable fouled in fishing gear. A cable is under considerable tension and cutting or breaking a cable could cause serious or even fatal injury. Cables carry very high voltages that can prove lethal if they are cut. The weight of a cable also affects the stability of smaller vessels increasing the risk of sinking should they attempt to raise a cable from the seabed. Loss of vessel and lives has resulted under these circumstances.

When a cable gets accidentally entangled, extreme care needs to be taken when attempting to free the fouled equipment. Comparatively little pressure is required to penetrate the insulation of a cable. This alone could render the cable unusable - even though it may not be broken.

If weights are excessive and you suspect you are entwined with a cable, DO NOT endanger your vessel and the lives of your crew by attempting to recover your equipment. Plot your ship's position, check your charts for any cables that may be close to your position.



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## Emergency contact details:

Guernsey Electricity  
**01481 242864**

Guernsey coastguard VHF Ch. 20  
**Tel. 01481 720672**

Jersey Electricity  
**01534 505293**

Jersey coastguard VHF Ch. 82  
**Tel. 01534 447722**

### *What do I do if my equipment fouls a cable?*

Alert your nearest coastguard station of your situation. If your coastguard is not obtainable call the emergency number on the front of this leaflet and state that an incident is occurring concerning an underwater submarine cable.

If you believe gear cannot be freed without risk or damage to the cable, the gear should be abandoned. CIEG will normally compensate for the loss of any gear under these circumstances but CIEG will however need to be satisfied that all reasonable precautions were taken to prevent damage to the cable. Claims for gear lost through entanglement with a submarine cable should be lodged in writing within 24 hours of arrival at the next port of call. Particulars of the incident should be given and include full details of the official vessel log.

## Further information

You can find the positions and coordinates of the CIEG Cable Network on the attached sheet including the repair joints.

Additional information including charts detailing the locations of submarine cables in UK waters can be viewed, free of charge at Kingfisher Information Service for Cable Awareness at [www.kisca.org.uk](http://www.kisca.org.uk).

European Subsea Cables Association ([www.escaeu.org](http://www.escaeu.org)) is an organisation of submarine cable owners, operators and suppliers and is primarily aimed at promoting marine safety and protecting cable installations on the UK.



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