

## SCAFFOLDING ERECTED WITHIN THE MINIMUM APPROACH DISTANCE OF HV CONDUCTORS - FOLLOW UP



**When and where this incident occurred:**  
27 April 2016, Ohakuri power station.

**Brief description of incident:**

Work was stopped when scaffolding erected to access the HV bushings of T4 was found to be 2.7 metres away from the live T3 220kV bushing.

As an action arising from this incident, Mercury requested clarification from the EEA's Safety Standards and Procedures Group (SSPG) of the applicable minimum approach distance (MAD) requirements for the erection and use of scaffolding in the vicinity of 220kV bare overhead conductors.

**SSPG Response:**

The SSPG has reviewed the requirements for the application of MAD's in the vicinity of HV conductors for work such as the erection of scaffolding, and subsequent work from the completed scaffold.

The SSPG considers that with respect to MADs for work erecting and working from scaffolding within electricity supply industry (ESI) property and under ESI instruction;

- The default MAD for all persons in all circumstances is [ECP 34](#) clause 9.2.1, i.e. 4 metres for 110 kV and below and 6 metres for >110kV.
- Where Mercury has given consent to the scaffolding company to work in the vicinity of its conductors the MAD for persons in Table 9 of ECP 34 may apply (identical MADs to Table 5 in the Guidelines).
- Where the scaffolding erection is for Mercury and on Mercury's site, SM-EI applies. Workers such as scaffolders carrying out work on a Mercury site are expected to be working to [SM-EI Parts 1&2](#), and should be trained in SM-EI and have their competence assessed accordingly. Where this is the case the MAD's in SM-EI rule 2.1201 *Minimum Approach Distances for Employees Near Exposed Live Conductors* may apply, i.e. the MAD for 220 kV could be reduced to 4m. This provision modifies the requirements of the WorkSafe Guideline Table 5 provided the training, competence and assessment criteria are met.
- Section 3 of ECP 34 specifies the distance that the erected scaffold, as a structure, must be from live conductors. This requirement is not addressed in the WorkSafe Guideline, but is a requirement that must be complied with in accordance with ECP 34. Distances are based on circumstances where engineering advice is not obtained and circumstances where it is.

(Note that scaffolders should not be working to SM-EI Part 3 MADs unless specifically competent to do so.)

For further information about this safety notification, please refer to Synergi Life incident [#8322](#), and its subsequent [Safety Alert](#) dated 23 May 2016.

Date issued: 19 June 2017

*Please discuss this Safety Alert with workers at your next tool box or team meeting*