



Scottish & Southern
Electricity Networks



Metal detecting

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks delivers the electricity to homes and businesses on many islands and remote peninsulas across the UK. These communities receive their supply through an extensive network of submarine electricity cables.

There are many places where submarine electricity cables transfer from the sea onto the shore, and may connect onto an overhead line or continue underground to an onshore substation - marked with warning beacons at landfall locations.

Depending on the geology of the shore, cables are laid on the sea bed or near the surface, usually with some form of protection to keep them out of harms way. Sometimes severe winter storms and fierce currents can wash away sand or other protection, leaving the cables exposed.

If you plan to disturb the ground near the shoreline, including metal detecting activities, it is a good idea to look for any signs that may indicate the presence of buried submarine electricity cables before you start.

These could be:

- Danger warning signs
- Specific marker posts
- Overhead power lines that end near the shore
- Substations (these may be large or small)



Metal detecting

When using a metal detector around shorelines, look for any signs of buried submarine electricity cables before you begin.

It is also a good idea to get up to date copies of cable locations from the electricity distribution company. This might also help you avoid false signals.



You can visit www.ssen.co.uk/NetworkAccessStatement to request up to date geographical plans of our cable locations

If a detector gives a continuous reading across a large length, it could be a buried submarine electricity cable or other related equipment, so you should avoid digging nearby.

If you see no suggestion of buried cables, try digging with a small spade or shovel rather than more aggressive tools like picks, forks or power tools.

Stay safe

If you find or uncover an underground/submarine cable:

- Keep clear. Always assume that the cables are live, regardless of their condition.
- If you have uncovered the cable, don't fill it back in - let us know, so we can make sure it's safe.
- Call the local electricity network operator to report it, using the 105 number.

**POWER CUT?
CALL 105**



Risks

Any activity that affects electricity cables is potentially dangerous. Damage caused to these cables, particularly when digging on or near the shoreline, may cause electric shock or explosive electrical arc and fire – which could lead to significant injury.

If you accidentally damage any electricity cable, keep your distance. Even if you think the power is off, it could be switched back on at any time. Always assume a cable is live – even if severed. The area around a damaged cable might be dangerous, so it is best to stay away until the electricity company confirms it is safe.

Emergency Procedure

If you hit an electricity cable, you must report it immediately. Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks emergency contact numbers:

- **0800 300 999** (Northern Scotland)
- **0800 072 7282** (Central Southern England)

For more information see:

Energy Networks Association advice: www.energynetworks.org/news/public-information/dial-before-you-dig

To avoid danger from underground services see: HSE HSG47

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Inveralmond House, 200 Dunkeld Road, Perth PH1 3AQ

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