

**ATLANTIC DIVISION**  
**NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEERING COMMAND**

**INCIDENT ABSTRACT**

**Incident Type:** near miss electrical incident  
**Injury:** NONE  
**Type of work:** Augering for light pole  
**Equipment:** Line Truck

**Description of the Incident:**

A master electrician was operating a line truck with auger attachment and while augering a hole for placement of a 30-foot light pole struck an unmarked 34,500-volt underground power line at 3 or 4-foot depth. Power for numerous activities was discontinued for approximately 8 hours until Power Company could splice lines and reenergize circuits. There were no injuries as a result of this incident.

**Direct cause:**

1. Area where pole was to be place was not scoped before augering was performed.

**Contributing Causes:**

- 1) After original scoping of the originally intended light pole location was performed by Miss Utility, private utility scoping company and PWC utilities, it was determined on site that the pole needed to be moved approximately 25 feet. The contractor did not scope this new location.
- 2) The original pole location scoping ticket had expired for both Miss Utility and PWC, however contractor had not reapplied to have revised area scoped again as required.
- 4) Electrical subcontractor did not have equipment on site to perform self-check for protection of their workers before proceeding.
- 5) PWC and Contractor communication needs to be improved. PWC scoped the area and has documentation, however contractor states PWC did not scope the area.
- 6) Private locator hired by company states they did not scope the area where the pole was finally placed. Company states they did have the area scoped per contractors request.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- 1) Scoping tickets must be current and maintained for duration of digging.**
- 2) Company is developing SOP for digging permits for all bases.**
- 3) Expanding areas to be marked to 25-foot box around entire area.**
- 4) Obtain sketches from Private locator after marking area.**
- 5) Home office will track digging permit dates to ensure they are current.**
- 6) Contractor to meet with PWC on site to verify underground utilities based on their maps.**
- 7) Workers hand shoveling will stay clear of area while augering.**
- 8) Auger to 2-foot depth and then use own scoping equipment for check before proceeding.**
- 9) Conduct visual inspections for hand holes and manholes in the area.**
- 10) Subcontractors past safety, according to OSHA records, show 5 past violations since July 2000. Prime contractor will check past performance of all subcontractors before hiring.**
- 11) Verbal communications between all parties is not enough. Prime contractor must maintain documentation of all scoping requests and areas marked.**
- 12) Contract allows placement of pole to be determined by government representative, however, this does not remove the requirement for additional scoping if the placement of the pole is in an area not previously scoped.**