

Health and safety

Health and safety is and always will be our top priority. Ours is a hazardous industry and we take the utmost responsibility to keep our employees and the public safe.

UK Power Networks distributes electricity safely and reliably to satisfied customers at the lowest cost. These priorities are all crucial, but safety wins every time.

It is always at the forefront of our minds that electricity is dangerous. We know that safety is rooted in the psychology of us all as human beings as much as it is in equipment and processes. We are meticulous and rigorous at a company level; alongside that discipline, we have a culture where everyone who works for or with UK Power Networks recognises that each of us has a personal responsibility to ourselves and our colleagues to make safety our number one priority.

We had three Lost Time Injuries in 2023/24, where the employees concerned needed to take at least one day off work. None of those three involved electrical activity. Two happened

because of lack of attention to the potential hazards in the surroundings and the other was caused by incorrect lifting technique. We have zero tolerance of accidents in the workplace, so three such accidents is three too many. We continue to reinforce our message to employees and contractors alike that safety must be our primary concern and each of us is responsible for our role in delivering a safe working environment.

Corporate memory

There is no substitute for firsthand experience for imprinting an event on our minds, but of course no one wants to experience or witness an accident. To capture some of the immediacy of safety failures of the past, we are building a stock of stories drawn from the collective memories of UK Power Networks and its predecessor companies.

At a series of forums and workshops, we are sharing these with employees in a way that sticks in their minds; they are the stories of real colleagues. These accounts set out the circumstances that led to the accident and describe what happened. We also examine what we have learnt from the accident and what we do differently in light of those lessons.

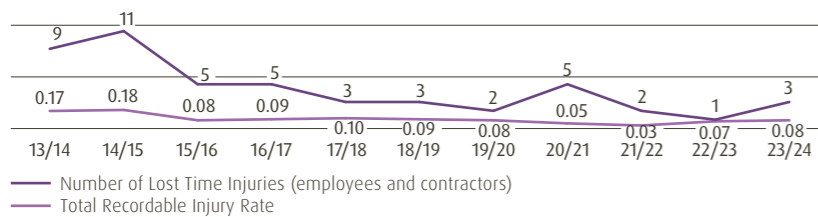
There are circumstances where we have no choice but to work on live overhead electricity lines to fix a fault. This is particularly hazardous and the small group of employees who work on live lines need highly focused training and preparation. We hold an annual conference for this group and this year we shared stories going back to 1975, chronicling the context and combination of circumstances that led to accidents, some of which – sadly – were fatal. The delegates at the conference were all too able to relate to these accounts. By building this corporate memory of what can go wrong, and spreading it throughout the workforce using case studies and role plays, we are striving to eliminate such accidents in the future.

Continuing to embed safety awareness in our operations

Since February 2023, UK Power Networks has held weekly company-wide Safety Calls at which representatives from across the business share safety performance and other relevant reports that everyone can learn from. The calls provide the leadership team with a holistic picture of safety throughout the company. A nominated leader reports on each area of the business from a safety perspective and a safety league table shows where each area is in relation to its peers. Activities are ranked and the focus is on improvement rather than criticism. The reports cover safety incidents and near misses, compliance breaches or changes and anything else that is relevant.

The output of the call is an action plan for each area, designed to address any gaps identified. This approach mirrors what we do in our customer service and network reliability functions. Since starting these calls we have seen significant improvement in safety compliance across the board, including, for example, better reporting levels and reduction in missed appointments relating to health and fitness to work.

Our performance in numbers



3
The number of injuries where employees needed at least a full day off work due to injuries in 2023/24

84%
improvement in the Total Recordable Injury Rate since 2010/11 when the rate was 0.48. This is the number of workplace injuries that result in an individual being absent from work, receiving professional medical treatment per 100,000 hours worked

On this page you will see how we have performed against the following Sustainable Development Goals:

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Safety climate survey

The UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE) runs a simple online questionnaire that measures a company's safety climate and explores employees' attitudes and perceptions in key areas of health and safety. The survey results in a report that provides the company with an analysis of its safety ethos in the context of its peer group and indicates those areas in the business where its approach to safety is strong, neutral or in need of attention. In 2023/24, UK Power Networks was in the top 10% of its peer group for six of the eight categories and in the top 40% for the remaining two. The report is helpful in identifying areas such as reporting of accidents and near misses where we need to improve our performance. Despite the accidents in recent years, UK Power Networks was once again recognised by the Energy Networks Association (ENA) as the safest DNO in Great Britain in 2023. We nevertheless remain vigilant and committed to continuous improvement in our safety record.

Employee health and well-being

As well as striving to eradicate all possibilities of hazards in the workplace, we also want our employees to be healthy and well. Employees have access to an app that provides support such as advice on nutrition, sleep and mindfulness, as well as kiosks to check physical health indicators such as blood pressure and BMI. In July 2023, following analysis of the data provided by our occupational health team, we ran an awareness campaign to encourage employees to lose an inch or two from their waistlines to avoid the health problems associated with carrying extra weight in that area.

Public safety

As well as doing everything we can to make UK Power Networks safe for those working for the company, we are also committed to ensuring that our actions or mistakes are not responsible for any harm coming to members of the public. Using a multi-channel communications approach, we reached over 0.6 million members of the public with our safety messages, against a target of 300,000 for this period. At the end of year one of this new five-year ED2 regulatory period, we have already reached 40% of our target of 1.5 million members of the public.

In 2023/24, we continued to establish a strong focus on engagement with high-risk groups as identified through analysis of incident data from the previous reporting period. Public data from 2022/23 showed that contact with underground services makes up 39% of the safety incidents in the year, interference with the network accounted for 17% and contact with overhead lines was 16% of the total. This informed the public safety approach for 2023/24.

Below is a sample of the public safety initiatives we have run:

- Social media campaigns to target the building industry.

How we are...

keeping people safe

OUR INNOVATION STRATEGY



“What the forum demonstrated to us was UK Power Networks' number one priority is safety. The emphasis was on good leadership and ensuring that no job is so important, urgent or costly that it can't be planned accordingly and delivered safely every time.

It was a well worthwhile day for contractors and much appreciated by us at TreeSmiths.”

Ben Smith
Director, TreeSmiths Ltd

CONTRACTOR FORUM

It is essential that our contractors are completely aligned with our internal standards, especially regarding safety. In March 2024, 150 contractors – along with our CEO and other senior UK Power Networks managers – gathered at a forum designed to share, learn and collaborate so that, together, we can reduce the risk of harm from our activities. The Forum looked at the principles underlying safe management of a hazardous workplace, sharing lessons from recent safety incidents and drawing on experience from other industries.

What this means for our customers

A safety-conscious workforce protects everyone: employees, customers and the general public. Contractors are a vital factor in how we deliver a safe service, so the better our contractors understand and follow our safety culture, the better – and safer – service they can provide.

- Continued the rollout of our external trailer safety stickers for Look Up and Look Out, with the NFU/RHA (Road Haulage Association) and British Sugar.
- Extended collaboration with the RHA.
- Over 54,000 safety-related resources provided to third parties, including to specific trade associations identified as high-risk.
- Attended and delivered key safety messaging at 42 external events focused on SME builders/trades, streetworks practitioners, the agricultural community, and the construction industry.
- Line Search Before You Dig (LSBUD) working party collaboration continues. Safety information is provided to all customers requesting UK Power Networks plans