

Information Sheet 01

Electric and Magnetic Fields Information Sheets

2016 Edition

EMF Information Sheet

1. Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMFs)

Working in the electricity industry involves exposure to electric and magnetic fields. This information sheet gives you the necessary information on how your safety from these EMFs is ensured.

What are EMFs and what do they do?

EMFs are produced wherever there are currents or voltages, and the higher the current or voltage, and the closer you are to it, the higher the EMFs. At high enough levels, they can interfere with the action of nerves, which is clearly undesirable. The first symptom you would expect to see is a flickering sensation round the outside of your vision. High levels of EMFs are found only in operational areas – lines, cables, substations, etc – not general office environments. Electric fields can also have indirect effects – making the hairs on your arm vibrate, or producing a tiny spark on contact with a metal object. Any symptoms are experienced instantaneously – there are no cumulative or long-term effects.

2. How are you protected against EMFs?

Independent experts (the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation) set exposure limits, incorporating a safety factor, which are incorporated into UK Regulations via an EU Directive. The electricity industry assesses all operational activities and ensures they comply with these exposure limits. Because your exposure is always below the exposure limits, no harmful effects of EMFs on nerves can occur, and there are no known harmful effects of EMFs at levels below the exposure limits.

3. Where can I find out more?

The electricity industry's Risk Assessment, with detailed information on exposures covering all operational activities, is available online at www.emfs.info/compliance/occupational.

4. What if I have questions or concerns?

If you think you may have experienced any symptoms from exposure to EMFs, or you have questions or concerns, your company's contact for EMF issues is given at the end of this information sheet. They will involve Occupational Health if that is necessary.

5. Do I need health surveillance if I am exposed to EMFs?

No. Health surveillance is only needed in the event of significant over-exposure (which should, of course, never happen) and is not needed routinely.

6. What if I have a medical device?

Passive medical devices – pins, nails, plates etc – should not pose any problem. But active medical devices – pacemakers, defibrillators, insulin pumps etc – can experience interference at levels below the exposure limits, and this could sometimes be serious. If you have such a device and work in an operation area where there may be high EMFs, you must inform your manager, who will

contact the relevant experts for further investigation. It won't necessarily stop you from doing your job but it must be investigated.

7. What if I'm pregnant?

There is no evidence that the mother or the unborn baby is any more sensitive to EMFs. But, for peace of mind, you will be given the option of complying with the general-public exposure limits, which are lower than the occupational limits, for the duration of your pregnancy. This affects operational jobs only – office jobs already comply with the public exposure limits. Discuss this with your manager when you notify them you are pregnant.

8. Contact:

For general information on EMFs, the electricity industry's website is www.emfs.info

To discuss specific concerns or report possible symptoms, contact:

[Please Insert company specific details below]

Contact Name:.....

Contact Number:

Email:

National Grid: the EMF Helpline, 08457023270 or emfhelpline@nationalgrid.com