Cable Awareness & Emergency Procedures

Please keep clear and do not damage submarine telecoms cables. You risk the loss of your gear and catch, and international communications can be disrupted. These cables carry high voltages and can be dangerous to life. It is an offence to wilfully damage submarine cables.

The coasts of the United Kingdom, Ireland and Europe have a large number of submarine cable systems. When fishing gear fouls a cable the results can be expensive and dangerous. Many cables have high breaking strains, some over 70 tonnes.

If gear is caught in these you may cause damage to nets and lines as well as disrupting international communications.

If you suspect that you have fouled a submarine telecoms cable the following action should be taken:

1. If weights are excessive and you suspect you are fast to a cable, DO NOT endanger your vessel and crew by attempting to recover your gear.
2. Carefully plot your ships position as accurately as possible.
3. Advise your Coastguard station of your situation or call the 24 hour Emergency Number and state that an incident is occurring concerning an underwater Submarine Telecommunications Cable.

This chart is provided to indicate the route positions of the TAT 14 K submarine telecommunications cable system. It is given for assistance and guidance. The Sea Fish Industry Authority nor Sprint accept liability for any inaccuracies however caused.

Useful Addresses

NetWork Services
(Sprint Fisheries Liaison)
Tel: +44 (0) 1404 46323
Mob: +44 (0) 7702 693660
Email: colinrichards@networkmarine.fsnet.co.uk

The Kingfisher Information Service
Sea Fish Industry Authority
Humber Seafood Institute
Origin Way, Europarc
Grimsby, DN37 9TZ
Tel: +44 (0) 1472 252307

SFPA Fishery Office (Peterhead)
Keith House, Seagate, Peterhead, AB42 1JP
Tel: +44(0) 1779 472254

SFPA Fishery Office (Inverness)
Longman House, 28 Longman Road, Inverness, IV1 1SF
Tel: +44(0) 1463 713955

SFF
24 Rubislaw Terrace, Aberdeen, AB10 1XE
Tel: +44(0) 1224 646944

HM Coastguard

Shetland MRSC
The Knab, Knab Road, Lerwick, Shetland, ZE1 0AX
Tel: +44 (0) 1595 692976

Aberdeen MRCC
Marine House, Blakies Quay, Aberdeen, AB11 5PB
Tel: +44 (0) 1224 592334

Stornoway MRSC
Clan Macquerrie House, Battery Point, Stornoway
Isle of Lewis, HS1 2RT
Tel: +44 (0) 1851 702013

24hr Emergency Contact No:
+44 (0) 8457 555 999

www.kis-orca.eu

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Special Charts Services
Produced by the Kingfisher Information Service of the Sea Fish Industry Authority on behalf of Sprint.

www.kingfishercharts.org

SUBMARINE CABLE AWARENESS CHART

TAT 14
(Segment K)
North Western Approaches

Edition August 2013
Submarine Cables and the Risk of Snagging

Subsea (submarine) telecommunications cables have been laid on the seabed since the eighteen fifties and although the target is to bury the cable (ideally to a depth of 0.8 metres), this is not always possible because of seabed conditions and the entire cable route should, therefore, be treated with the utmost caution.

The vessels most at risk are those with towed gear, bottom and beam trawls and dredges. Static gear, whilst not entirely free from risk, is less likely to be affected.

In the event of becoming entangled with the cable there is a high probability of damage to or loss of fishing gear as well as fishing time and catch. If attempts are made to lift the cable to the surface or to pull the gear free there is the very real risk of loss of stability eventually leading to capsize with resultant loss of life.

Fibre Optic cable consists of an inner optical core encased within a copper clad high tensile steel wire rope insulated with polythene. In water less than 1500 meters deep, protection is added against fishing and anchor damage in the form of external steel wire armour.

If a cable is broken by fishing, anchoring or other seabed activities it will be repaired. The damaged section is recovered to the surface and a new section spliced in. This spliced area represents a risk to fishermen, there will be slack cable on the seabed equal to approximately twice the water depth and post repair burial is not as effective as installation burial.

How to Reduce the Risks Associated with Submarine Cables

1. Immediately plot the route co-ordinates on your paper charts and/or enter them into your fishing plotter.
2. Avoid fishing directly over the cable route with heavy bottom contact gear.
3. Remember that areas of bare or outcropping rock and where the cable crosses other cables and pipelines, are the areas where the cable is most likely to be least buried.

The closer to the surface a telecommunications cable is lifted when fouled by fishing gear, the more danger there is to the fishing vessel. If it is thought prudent to slip or cut one of both warps or bridles in an attempt to clear a cable from the fishing gear, always lower the gear to the seabed first. Never attempt to slip anything bearing excessive weight.

Cable Maintenance Vessel

Vessel: CS Léon Thévenin
Please be aware that there have been several incidents resulting in cable repairs caused by snagging with fishing gear in this area. All submarine telecommunications cable in depths of more than 800 metres is either on or near the seabed and therefore a greater risk of snagging exists. Please avoid fishing close to cables in these areas.

PLEASE KEEP CLEAR OF AND DO NOT DAMAGE SUBMARINE TELEPHONE CABLES. THESE CABLES CARRY HIGH VOLTAGES AND CAN BE DANGEROUS TO LIFE.

This data is issued as a guide only. Seafish, Cable Owners and Distributors accept no responsibility for any inaccuracies however caused. Please be aware that other cables may exist in addition to those shown on this chart.

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