ICPC Recommendation

Recommendation No. 8

Procedure To Be Followed Whilst Offshore Seismic Survey Work Is Undertaken In The Vicinity Of Active Submarine Cable Systems

Contact for Enquiries and Proposed Changes

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1. INTRODUCTION

An active submarine cable system includes Electro-Optic Devices that are required to manage the electro-optical signal at intervals along its route. If the internal components of these submerged devices are subjected to acceleration greater than specification there is a risk of serious damage.

This document therefore recommends the procedure to be followed whilst offshore seismic survey work is undertaken in the vicinity of active submarine cable systems.

2. PROCEDURE FOR OFFSHORE SEISMIC SURVEY WORK

2.1 Prior to Work Commencing

2.1.1 The Seismic Survey Company (SSC) responsible for the survey work shall provide details of the location and timing (commencement date and duration) of their survey plans to the responsible cable Maintenance Authority (MA) in order to determine if there are any known issues that need to be taken into account prior to the SSC undertaking detailed planning of their seismic survey grid lines.

2.1.2 Where a planned seismic survey would result in pressure waves of 2.0 bar and above arriving at the seabed in the location of Electro-Optic Devices, the MA shall require the SSC to adjust the grid lines in order to reduce the pressure seen by the EOD to below 2.0 bar.

2.1.3 Upon request by the MA, the SSC shall provide written evidence to demonstrate that the proposed separation is sufficient to protect submerged EODs from pressure waves that are above 2.0 bar.

2.1.4 If the SSC is unable to provide such written evidence, then as an added safety factor due to inherent uncertainties, the MA shall require the SSC to adjust the positions of the grid lines so that at least 500 metres horizontal separation between them and the location of submerged EODs is achieved.

2.1.5 The SSC shall work with the MA to accurately identify the physical location of the submerged plant items in the vicinity of the planned survey grid lines. The MA shall endeavour to contact the recognised government authorities to determine the possible presence of other cables which may be uncharted. The location of cables may be marked with buoys if applicable, subject to the MA approving a proposed methodology. Depending on the circumstances, this location work may require either divers or a Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) to assist in the cable locating work. The cost of this location work shall be to the SSC's account.

2.1.6 All correspondence relating to the work shall be sent via Project Coordinators (and deputies) who are appointed for the duration of the work by the SSC and MA. The appointed staff must be contactable 24 hrs per day.

2.1.7 When the planning of the survey grid lines has been completed, the SSC shall advise the MA Project Coordinator of the scope and timing of marine seismic survey activities planned to be undertaken within the vicinity of the cable(s).

2.1.8 Once the timing of the work is known, the MA and/or the NOC responsible for the cable system(s) shall provide timely advice to all cable owners and cable capacity users of the potentially hazardous work. The MA and/or the NOC shall ensure that all restoration plans are current for the cables affected by the seismic survey work.

2.1.9 The MA shall ensure the SSC is aware that the SSC will be liable for the direct (cable repair) of any cable repair operation arising from the seismic survey work undertaken by the SSC or their sub-contractors.

2.2 Immediately Prior to Work Commencing

2.2.1 The SSC Project Coordinator shall advise the MA Project Coordinator that work is about to commence and provide the MA Project Coordinator with an emergency contact number (usually of the work vessel undertaking the seismic survey work near the cables) in order to allow the MA Project Coordinator to immediately halt the work if required.

2.3 During the Work

2.3.1 The SSC Project Coordinator shall keep the MA Project Coordinator informed of the work progress and, in particular, any variations to the work plan previously notified/agreed.

2.3.2 At least 48 hours advance notice shall be given for any part of a seismic survey operation that is to be undertaken within 1km of submerged EODs that are located in water depths where the seabed is exposed to a 2.0 bar pressure wave. This will allow the MA Project Coordinator to arrange special monitoring of the cable system performance while the seismic survey work is underway.

2.3.3 If deemed necessary, the MA shall provide (and the SSC shall allow) a MA representative to be on board the work vessel during the seismic survey work in order to oversee the operation and ensure that it follows the agreed plan.

2.4 After The Work Is Complete

2.4.1 The results of the seismic survey work may lead to offshore civil engineering work, at which time, the procedures in *ICPC Recommendation No.7 Procedure To Be Followed Whilst Offshore Civil Engineering Work Is Undertaken In The Vicinity Of Active Submarine Cable Systems* shall apply.

3. LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Nothing in this Recommendation changes any party's responsibilities and obligations under:

a) United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, adopted 10 December 1982, 1833 UNTS 3 (entered into force 16 November 1994) [UNCLOS], including those obligations listed in Articles 58, 78, 113, and 114.

b) Convention for the Protection of Submarine Telegraph Cables, adopted 14 March 1884, TS 380 (entered into force 1 May 1888) [1884 Cable Convention], including those obligations listed in Articles 2, 4, 5, and 6.

4. REFERENCES

Document Number	Title
Recommendation No. 7	Procedure To Be Followed Whilst Offshore Civil Engineering Work Is Undertaken In The Vicinity Of Active Submarine Cable Systems

5. DEFINITIONS

The following words, acronyms and abbreviations are referred to in this document.

Term	Definition
EOD	Submerged electro-optic devices that are installed at intervals along a submarine cable to boost signal transmission. They include repeaters, branching units and equalisers.
MA	Maintenance Authority – the organisation responsible for the maintenance and repair of cable systems.
NOC	Network Operations Centre – the location which continually monitors the cable system
PC	Project Coordinator will be the single company point of contact for the duration of the project
ROV	Remotely Operated Vehicle
SSC	Seismic Survey Company