

**TLP N244 Electrification & Plant Project
SHE Brief No. 023 – 24th February 2010**

Protecting Slow Worms During Winter Operations

Slow worms are protected under schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, making it an offence to deliberately or recklessly kill or injure a slow worm or sell or offer a slow worm for sale.

The slow worm (right) is not a snake but a lizard that has lost its legs through its evolution. They are relatively slow moving, even when disturbed, and move rather stiffly. They have a glossy body, often with a metallic sheen.

Whilst carrying out our operations there is a possibility that we may encounter slow worms particularly during excavation works.

As a result the following precautions/actions should be implemented to ensure that we do not cause harm to this species.

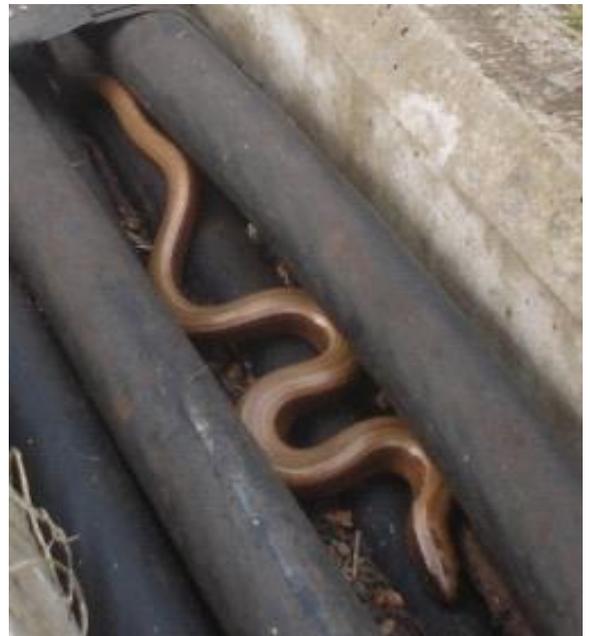
Operations between October and late February/March

During this period slow worms will be hibernating. The exact dates of entering hibernation and arousing from hibernation can vary depending upon the weather conditions and geographical location.

The controls to be implemented include:

- An appointed person, (supervisor) should be available on site when the vegetation clearance operations take place.
- Any dense vegetation should be removed using hand-held tools. Excavation of the first 0.5 metre should be carried out using spades.
- Each section of turf removed should be inspected for signs of slow worms.
- Where soil beneath the first 0.5 metre is compacted and undisturbed, the remaining excavation may be carried out using a suitable machine.

Where hibernating slow worms are accidentally encountered during excavation, they should be removed (with surrounding turf, if possible) to a nearby area. The turf should be lightly covered with other turf or other vegetation in order to maintain the individual in a frost free environment.



Direct handling of slow worms must be kept to a minimum.

All encounters with slow worms are to be reported to IGC and the SHE Department.

For further information or to report an encounter with slow worms please contact either Leanne Tipple, 07812 976 540, Nigel Gauntley, 07528 979 400, or Paul Atkins – Maher, 07966 337 581

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No brief required	
Disciplines affected	
Managers only	