

# Datadot Technology and Theft from Substations

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Faced with a growing number of incidents of theft of copper wire, Saint John Energy, in conjunction with the Saint John Police Force, is taking action to deter this criminal activity.

Copper wire used for grounding is an integral part of the electrical system. It provides personnel safety as well as electrical stability to the system. Interference with its integrity could result in severe injury or death, by electrocution, to any person exposed to the hazard. In addition, the cost of property damage to the utility's electrical system or to consumer's equipment as a result of insufficient grounding far exceeds the value of the stolen wire. Saint John Energy has incurred \$25,000 in repair costs due to stolen ground wire over the past 18 months.

"The safety of the public, utility workers and other emergency personnel is our primary concern" stated Eric Marr, President & CEO of Saint John Energy. "We hope to stop the theft of ground wire before it occurs by applying a variety of methods."

Chief among these will be the utilization of DataDot technology which involves the application of a spray-on coating, carrying thousands of tiny identification dots, to bare copper wire. It is only necessary to have one of these micro-dots on the wire in order for the police to identify the owner as Saint John Energy. DataDot technology is being utilized by numerous electric utilities across Canada including BC Hydro, New Brunswick Power and Nova Scotia Power. Hydro One in Ontario and Hydro Quebec are also piloting the program this summer.

"With the cooperation of the Saint John Police Force and local scrap dealers, we hope the practice of stealing ground wire can be deterred." said Mr. Marr.

In addition to the application of wire identification, substations now have surveillance equipment installed and the use of an alternate material for ground wires is being investigated.

Saint John Energy requests that any member of the public report any suspicious behaviour, involving substations or other electrical facilities, directly to the police force at 648-3333, Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 or to Saint John Energy at 658-5252.

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