Open Trenching

What is open trenching?

Open trench installation is a traditional construction method used to install underground conduit systems. For the Clean Energy Link project, the trenches will house high-voltage transmission cables.



How open trenching works

1. **Stage one: site preparation**

   We establish a work area including traffic management and barricades to ensure safety for pedestrians, road users and workers. Before any works take place, we locate existing underground services using ground penetrating radar surveys.

2. **Stage two: trench excavation**

   We excavate a trench within the road reserve or verge along the approved alignment. This involves cutting through asphalt and using equipment like backhoes or trenchers to dig and remove soil.

   Trenches will be roughly 1.5 metres wide and will vary in length, between approximately 30 and 40 metres.

3. **Stage three: conduit installation**

   Once the trench is excavated, we install conduits (protective tubes or pipes) to house the high-voltage transmission cables. These conduits help protect the transmission cable from damage, moisture, pests and fire risks.

4. **Stage four: backfilling and temporary reinstatement**

   After the conduits are installed, we backfill the trench with suitable material and compact it. A temporary road surface or verge treatment is installed to maintain safe access. Speed reductions may be in place for the safety of road users during this time.

   Once the trench is built, the next step is cable hauling (see the cable hauling fact sheet for more information).

5. **Stage five: final reinstatement**

   Once the transmission cables have been hauled through the conduit system and jointed, we permanently reinstate all affected roads, verges and footpaths.



What you'll notice

- We'll put temporary lane closures or detours in place to keep workers, vehicles and community members safe. We'll provide details in works notices before works start.
- If trenching occurs near a pedestrian path, temporary path detours will be in place to ensure the safety of pedestrians and workers.
- Excavator, compactor and roller vehicles will cause noise and vibrations. Noise levels will remain within the Western Australian Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations.
- Dust may be created during excavation and while the trench is open. We'll use water trucks, water trailers and barricades to minimise dust impacts during construction.
- Temporary road surfaces may remain in place until cable hauling and final reinstatement are complete.

Need more information?

General construction queries
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