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# TNB loses RM180m in cable theft

**DANGEROUS:** The losses over a 10-year period is burning a big hole in the utility company's pocket and is compromising safety

**VEENA BABULAL**

**T**ENAGA Nasional Bhd (TNB) suffered losses of nearly RM180 million for almost a decade in about 73,000 incidents of cable theft and vandalism.

Selangor topped the list recording RM55.4 million in losses, incurred in some 15,800 cases, followed by Johor which suffered losses of RM31 million in some 14,500 cases.

Ranking third was Kuala Lumpur with losses of RM27 million in some

8,340 cases.

"This burns a big hole in our pocket," said TNB delivery division senior general manager (asset maintenance) Ho Peng Choong.

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## Severe implications to cable thefts

"One is that the thief is risking his life and the other is damage to our system. **Voltage rises due to the removal of the cables and burns the electrical apparatus in our substation.** Bulbs also explode as a result."

**Ho Peng Choong**, TNB delivery division senior general manager (asset maintenance)

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Ho, who gave *Streets* the statistics after an electricity safety and awareness campaign here yesterday, said the figures were recorded from 2004 to May this year.

“The profile of these thieves range from drug addicts to those who steal cables for their precious metal like copper.

“But what most people don’t realise is that there are severe implications to cable thefts.

“One is that the thief is risking his life and the other is damage to our system.

“The voltage rises due to the removal of the cables and burns the electrical apparatus in our substation. Bulbs also explode as a result,” said Ho.

He also said there were 28 electricity-related deaths last year as well as the previous year, quoting the Energy Commission’s statistics.

The commission’s data also revealed that there were 55 and 62 electricity-related accidents recorded last year and 2011, respectively.

On the campaign for schoolchild-

ren, Ho said children had to be reminded that electricity was an unseen danger.

He said they had to be educated and in turn educate their parents, drawing on the loading of plug points with extension plug points for an example.

“They need to know the importance of safety and the proper way to deal with electrical appliances from young.”

TNB corporate affairs vice-president Adelina Iskandar said they were drawing the campaign out of the classroom to remind children to be safe when they were at play.

“We want to tell children to be safe, especially those who fly kites near our power lines and electrical towers,” she said.

She was adding to Ho’s statement that TNB patrols areas under its towers and that no structure above 1.83m was allowed under the towers.

TNB also visited 30 Felda schemes this year to educate settlers on how to use their harvesting sickles so that it does not get caught in

power lines.

Last year, a settler in Sekinchan was injured when his sickle caught a cable.

So far, over 2,100 Felda settlers in 33 schemes in the peninsular have participated in the power company’s safety campaigns.

Federal Territories (Kuala Lumpur) Education department director Abdullah Mad Yunus said TNB was doing a good service by organising such campaigns.

“Children are easily exposed to dangers and risks of electrocution. These talks and quiz help to drive a point home on the unseen danger that is electricity. Unlike fire it can’t be seen so this makes it more dangerous,” he said.

More than 200 from over 40 primary schools in the Pudu-Bangsar education district attended the event held at TNB’s headquarters in Bangsar.

More than 5,700 students from about 1,370 schools have attended safety programmes organised by TNB over the past two years.

TNB has also conducted such programmes for more than 6,500 teachers over the past seven years.



**Ho Peng Choong** (third from left) explaining to pupils the dangers of playing under electrical towers. Pic by Syarafiq Abd Samad