

CERN Press Release: Incident in LHC sector 34

Geneva, 20 September 2008. During commissioning (without beam) of the final LHC sector (sector 34) at high current for operation at 5 TeV, an incident occurred at mid-day on Friday 19 September resulting in a large helium leak into the tunnel. Preliminary investigations indicate that the most likely cause of the problem was a faulty electrical connection between two magnets, which probably melted at high current leading to mechanical failure. CERN's¹ strict safety regulations ensured that at no time was there any risk to people.

A full investigation is underway, but it is already clear that the sector will have to be warmed up for repairs to take place. This implies a minimum of two months down time for LHC operation. For the same fault, not uncommon in a normally conducting machine, the repair time would be a matter of days.

Further details will be made available as soon as they are known.

¹ CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, is the world's leading laboratory for particle physics. It has its headquarters in Geneva. At present, its Member States are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. India, Israel, Japan, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, Turkey, the European Commission and UNESCO have Observer status.