



Safety Alert

Water Service Strike

4 May 2021

The following pages of this safety alert were issued by Highways England's supply chain partner:

Osborne

HEi234

If you have any queries about this safety alert information announcement or any other safety announcement then please contact Veena.Bharath@highwaysengland.co.uk

home safe
and **well**



Damaged pipe releasing water



Previous Vacuum Excavation works undertaken to expose chamber location (Old watermain shown)



What Happened?

At approximately 08:15 on Friday 16th April 2021 a 300mm dia watermain was struck by an Osborne supplier's 20t 360 excavator. This occurred while undertaking operations to install a new drainage run and chamber location. It caused damage to the pipe and a significant water release.

Vacuum excavation had previously been undertaken to expose services around the new drainage chamber location, but this did not expose the subsequently damaged watermain location. The services were marked on the ground, a trial hole had been undertaken previously adjacent to existing drainage run (which new drainage run would follow) to identify watermain location.

Those involved did not follow permit process to not mechanically excavate within 500mm of a known service (in some circumstances this may be increased). A discussion was held to discuss how the works would proceed, but clarity was not reached about how the risk of the services would be managed. An opportunity to STOP Think was missed.

Impacts

Thankfully no persons were injured, and no loss of service to surrounding businesses / premises was notified / established.

Had the release of water been in the opposite direction there was potential to impact the adjacent road traffic, and had this been another service type the potential for life changing injuries or worse could have occurred.

Work was stopped, the service owner was contacted to conduct repair and investigation was undertaken.

Immediate Actions

1. Ensure all services are exposed (Trial Holes) in dig area.
2. Ensure those involved in task are adequately briefed and fully understand service locations, permit constraints and safe digging practices required.
3. Plan works effectively to ensure maximum use of safe digging techniques (Vacuum Excavation in this case) to identify all services and minimise mechanical excavation.
4. Ensure daily permit checks are undertaken.
5. Ensure all personnel on site feel empowered to STOP works, challenge and raise concerns higher if response does not allow works to proceed safely.

The incident investigation has been completed, learning outcomes identified and actioned, and a further update to this STOP Think moment may be issued.

STOP Think! Have a conversation. Make the safe choice