

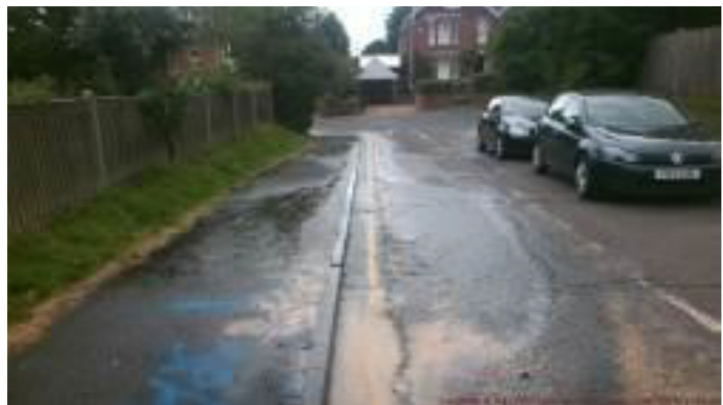


Safety Alert

Issue No. 1
Date: Oct 2019

What Happened

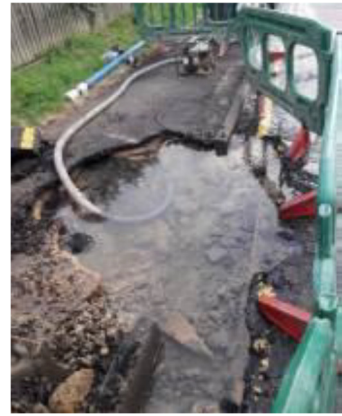
A visible leak was reported in an area with extremely loose sandy soil. Photographs taken during and after the repair of the leak show sand and water running down the road adjacent to the leak.



The technician and gang did not appreciate that the soil conditions in this area would be prone to voids. As an excavator was driven over the footway it collapsed causing the excavator to tip and resulting in injury to the driver requiring hospital treatment.

If the potential for a void had been considered then as soon as the main had been isolated the ground could have been tapped with a pole to detect any hollow ground.

Once a void had been confirmed, ground penetrating radar (GPR) could have been used to assess it fully thus avoiding driving plant over unstable ground.



What Lessons Can Be Learnt?

Technicians and gangs should consider the potential for voids around leaks.

Where voids are considered likely they should employ percussive techniques to identify them and possibly GPR to assess them.

What Do You Need To Do?

- When assessing leaks consider whether there are signs of erosion based on physical signs (sand washing out) and knowledge of the area.
- Where voids are a possibility assess whether the ground is stable before placing any weight on it.

