Safety – Toolbox Talk

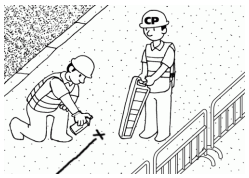
EXISTING SERVICES

Services which covers, Gas, Water, Electricity, Telephone, Communication and other such pipelines and Cables are in the majority of cases buried and so are out of site and mind until such time as they are discovered during excavation.

Prior to any works on site the existing services within the site must be found and located, consulting the relative statutory authorities and the use of location equipment will do this.

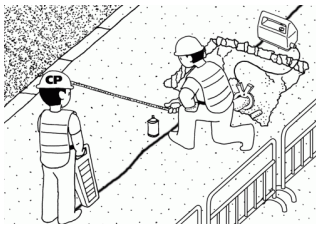
Cables can be located using a CAT or Cable Avoidance Tool, using a radio frequency to locate the services in either power or radio mode depending on the type of service to be located. Pipes and cables can be located using a GENNY and CAT combine, with the Genny connected to metallic surface on the pipe or directly above the cable to be traced. The CAT is then used in Signal mode.

Once an existing service is located it should be clearly marked on the site by the use of offsets from fixed objects, pegs or spray paint. When carrying out excavation works your supervisor will issue you with a permit to dig that will show your work area and any services within your work area it should also detail the extent of which mechanical excavation can be carried out adjacent to any services.



Trial holes should be carried out all known services so as to accurately identify and plot their position. To highlight any clashes with proposed or planned work e.g. an existing pipe clashing with the invert of a new pipeline.

When excavating for existing services, excavation should be carried out by hand, power tools should never be used directly over an existing service, unless it has been made dead or isolated as this may result in explosion or electrocution.



When a service is located in the bottom of a trench it should be protected with suitable timber or other material to prevent damage. If a service runs across a trench slings or props to keep it out of the way of the works and to avoid any damage should be used to support it.

In the event of the discovery of an uncharted service or a service surrounded in concrete report it to your supervisor immediately for advice

By doing so we hope to be able to: -

Reduce the Number of accidents and near misses on site

Avoid Delays; caused by waiting for repairs to be made to damaged services.

Reduce Costs, by avoid the costs and fines as a result of damaging an existing service.

- ✓ DO work under a Permit to Dig
- ✓ DO report any damages immediately
- ✓ DO reinstate suitable Surround and Marker Tape
- ✓ DO PLAN – LOCATE - DIG

- ✖ DON'T work without a Permit to Dig
- ✖ DON'T rely on marker tape to warn you of any services
- ✖ DON'T use services as ladders or steps for access and egress of excavations
- ✖ DON'T mechanical excavate with 500mm of any known services.

© A J Burgess