Zero incidents
Zero harm
Zero compromise
Keeping you healthy and safe, every day at work.

ESSENTIAL STANDARD no.27

Utility Management

Thames Water

9. Trial Holes

After identifying the approximate location of underground services using all the available information, the authorised person must ensure trial holes are carefully dug by hand to establish the exact location and depth of the underground services throughout the proposed excavation area. Consider taking photos of the area before, after and during trial holing. A Trial Hole Record Sheet should be available to record the findings of trial hole activities.

Where trial holes are required to expose a service, the service should be positively identified. This means the service should be exposed so that:

- It is visible to establish the type, colour and material is consistent with the service expected;
- Its full circumference is visible to confirm the size is consistent with the service expected; and
- Adequate checks are made to ensure no new services have been laid adjacent to a redundant one e.g. by inducing a signal into the service.

It should not be assumed that underground services follow a straight line or are at a consistent depth between trial holes.

10. Training and Competence

A competent person must supervise all works around underground apparatus. Give people working in excavations clear instructions on how to work safely.

Thames Water requires the responsible person/ supervisor to have an appropriate level of competence (training and experience) to supervise any breaking ground activity - SSSTS/SMSTS (for visiting supervision), or IOSH Managing Safely and where undertaking any street works NRASWA training appropriate to their level.

In addition, all persons breaking ground will require Proqual Level 2 training or equivalent in service avoidance.

11. Monitoring and Supervision

Before starting work on a TW contract for the first time, an approved competent supervisor must be present to ensure that persons under their control understand the requirements of any relevant safe systems of work i.e. method statements and risk assessments, and that they have the appropriate plans, records, equipment and materials to carry out the work safely.

The lead person/operator and team must continually monitor the site for changing conditions throughout the duration of the work. Record all monitoring. Suspend work and perform or review a point of work risk assessment for any significant changes before continuing. Record changes on the permit, or reissue the permit as necessary. Install any additional safety controls before recommencing work. Check and record findings from data logging records regularly to ensure compliance regarding the accurate/regular use of service avoidance equipment.

12. Emergencies

Make emergency arrangements to deal with any contingency relating to the work. Identify emergency contacts (including telephone numbers) who must make contact with the Service Provider and the Emergency Services (where appropriate) in the event of a damaged service or other emergency.

Identify specific actions to deal with the danger relating to the type of service e.g. gas leaks would involve evacuating the immediate vicinity, prohibiting smoking, naked flames, or ignition sources, contacting the Service Provider, contacting the Police and Fire Service, advising local occupants and generally assisting as directed by the Service Provider or Emergency Services.

Consider first aid arrangements where appropriate. Instruct all personnel to be aware of the actions needed in the event of any emergency including any degree of damage to a service.

13. Incident/Near Miss Reporting and Investigation

Report all underground apparatus strikes through Safeguard. Perform a full investigation on any strike on electrical services and conduct an MD led call within 24hrs. Perform an executive incident review for all significant incidents with the potential for loss or injury. Following a service strike the team must undergo a drug and alcohol test at the very fist opportunity following the incident