

The purpose of this safety bulletin received from Scottish Water is to highlight to those who work in the highways and pavements a recent serious incident. It is quite possible for the described circumstances that allegedly led to this serious incident to be present elsewhere in Scotland. Contractors may discover similar examples whilst carrying out other works or activities. If similar circumstances are discovered please phone the number detailed below to help prevent further injury

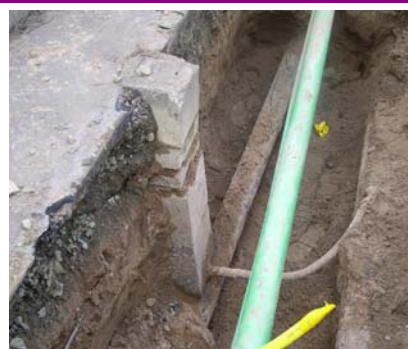
INCIDENT TYPE:

INSTALLATION OF UNDERGROUND APPARATUS



What happened

A serious gas explosion occurred, causing considerable damage to the house and seriously injuring the occupant. The explosion was caused by the failure of a gas main in the public footpath outside the house. Subsequent investigations have identified that there were several factors contributing to the failure including the close proximity of a water toby box. This has highlighted the need to ensure that all services and underground apparatus installed by Scottish Water and its contractors on our behalf are installed in such a way that they do not interfere with any other services or utility providers. It must be stressed that this water toby box was installed in the 1960's and that other work has been carried out in the area by other utilities over the last 40 years.



What actions should be taken

Under no circumstances should any chamber be installed in a manner where it will directly or partially rest on top of any other utility.

The example shown in the photographs existed in the ground for many years and was discovered during excavation work. Should Scottish Water Operators or Contractors come across situations similar to the above then steps must be taken to ensure that it is rectified in order to safeguard the other utility concerned. The Health and Safety Incident Line (01382 563 217) must also be informed.

Although the example above shows a stopcock chamber the same principles must apply to valve chambers, hydrants pits, water meter housings etc and to apparatus installed on sewerage systems such as manhole chambers, or where any street furniture is built upon other utilities.

Particular care must be taken when crossing over or below other utilities with water mains and services, particularly in the case of pipes, ducts or large cables – As undermining, or load bearing of such services could result in future damage being caused.

The National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG) provides specific guidance in their documents *Recommended Positioning of Utilities Mains and Plant for New Work (1986)* and *Guidelines on the Positioning and Colour Coding of Utilities Apparatus (2003)*. Those documents augment other guidance specific to the water industry such as *Water for Scotland* and *Sewers for Scotland*, which give guidance on design and construction etc.