



Safety Alert

Unsafe manhole cover

12 August 2021

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

Kier

SHE alert

Safety • Health • Environment



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Unsafe manhole cover

What happened?

Whilst strimming a sightline which was heavily overgrown, an operative stepped into a partially open manhole causing him to twist his knee and bruise/graze his leg. The operative received first aid and will return to work with no lost time.

The manhole cover had become unseated leaving an open gap which was hidden by the dense vegetation.

Before clearance



After clearance



After remedials



What can you do to avoid a similar incident?

- Request and review any asset information prior to works commencing – look for possible hidden hazards such as manholes, gullies, cables etc.
- Check your access arrangements before starting work. Make sure that plant and personnel can get safely to and from the work area.
- Always follow your Safe System of Work (SSOW)
- Check the work area (as far as possible) before commencing work to identify any hazards.
- Ensure previously unidentified hazards are recorded on your Point of Work Risk Assessment.
- Ensure everyone working on site is made aware of any hazards identified.
- Clearly mark physical hazards with cones, tape, or physical barriers.
- Ensure you are wearing all PPE required by your safe system of work.
- Maintain good housekeeping practices throughout the works.
- Probe dense vegetation or long grass with a survey pole or similar before stepping onto it.
- Be cautious when visibility of the ground is restricted and test the ground is solid before stepping forward.
- Check that coverings can take your weight and are stable before stepping onto them.
- If you feel unsafe or notice any new hazards, stop works and inform your supervisor.