

DRAINS SURVEY

NEAR MISS - SAFETY ALERT

Safety Alert

This Safety Alert has been issued to raise awareness of the hazards and control measures associated with CCTV Survey of surface drains and staff entry to confined spaces.

It is essential to identify all sources of flow into the drains systems, e.g. holding tanks, overflows, etc. and to provide appropriate control measures if any man or equipment entry is required.



Above - Water was released upstream of a drains chamber in an approved worksite, by a maintenance team unaware of the potential impact to the staff engaged on CCTV survey works.
Below – Holding Tank outlet chamber (source of release)



What went wrong (No staff injured)

Water was released from a holding tank into a surface drain system where CCTV surveys including jetting and debris removal were planned and authorised under permit.

The release of water created an unsafe condition, with a high flow of water, in a drain chamber (6 m deep) within a worksite where confined space entry was planned. Work team were above ground at the time, did not attempt to enter drain and declared an unsafe condition. A Near Miss.

Initial hazard identification had not identified the holding tank as an inlet to the system. The permit system did not identify isolation of the holding tank outlet valve as a requirement for safe working.

The work team relied on the permit from the site owner for safe working.

Lessons learned

To minimise the opportunity for a similar incident the following actions are recommended;

- 1) Ensure a comprehensive hazard review workshop for the system is performed in advance of Works. Source drawings, walk down system, record site features and involve competent member of Owners site team.
- 2) Develop task specific RAMS with clear scope capture and task specific risks and with specific control measures and mitigations for hazards of task and confined space works
- 3) Ensure high pressure jetting in advance of CCTV survey has been recognised as higher risk activity and a trigger to CDM Works under Regulation 2 with appropriate CDM role holders identified.
- 4) Where possible, avoid confined space working by use of best available survey & cleaning equipment. All remaining confined space work to be managed with effective communication of access & egress to site control team.
- 5) Understand the permit system operated by Site Owners, provide clear information on activity to be performed, and if in any doubt, do not accept permit. Review and walk worksite with Owners team again.
- 6) Do not solely rely or trust others to provide a safe work site. Ensure you and your team are aware of hazards too.
- 7) Continue to re-inforce the need for dynamic risk assessment over the course of the working day. This work team observed unsafe condition and took a positive decision to stop work and not enter drains chamber.
- 8) Make sure any near misses are reported, reviewed and lessons learned shared with our team.