

Recent BDA Audit Findings (April 2023)

Findings from two recent BDA audits have flagged important issues regarding safety of on-site operatives that warrant immediate reminders and clarification to the BDA's membership.

Firstly, an audit was recently conducted on a busy, narrow, two-lane A road with a lane closure in place for the drilling activity where the drill crew were expected to work within less than 1m of moving traffic. During the audit, the Lead Driller did not have access to any site-specific RAMS or site safety paperwork that outlined the traffic management plan, or the protective measures that had been agreed and should have been implemented by the traffic management contractor. Without access to the paperwork, the auditor was unable to verify that the drilling activity and general site was being conducted and managed according to agreed expectations; this resulted in a terminated audit visit.

Secondly, a recent audit of an all-terrain, track-mounted cable percussion drilling machine was undertaken. Upon inspection of the drilling crew's health and safety documentation, working at height was not outlined as a risk within the RAMS, nor were physical safety measures in place across the entirety of the driller's working platform to mitigate the risk of falling from the track-mounted machine. The audit was suspended until safety measures were put in place to mitigate the risk following discussions between the Contractor, Auditor, Lead Driller, Audit management team and Audit Steering Group representatives.

The BDA would like to remind members to ensure that the workplace risk assessment or site safety plans provided to their drillers always reflect the actual worksite and include documented mitigation measures that the Lead Driller is expected to implement and control. Every Contractor should consider the specific worksite, especially if there are known exceptional circumstances or site hazards with high risk, such as traffic, working at height, water or noise, for example. More specifically, the audit is intended to test the Lead Driller's knowledge of their technique and equipment, and that includes ensuring that the workplace is safe for the drill crew, visitors or the public. Accurate and up-to-date risk assessments, method statements and wider site safety plans are crucial to allow a Lead Driller to be fully informed of all risks and that they can implement all required mitigation to ensure work is conducted as safely as possible.