SAFETY ALERT

MCANDREW UTILITIES LTD
UTILITIES AND CIVIL ENGINEERING

On the 18th of July 2023, a streetlight cable was damaged at a site in Staveley, Chesterfield – the following Safety Alert is a reminder to all operatives of the preventative measures that must be followed when excavating around existing underground apparatus.

Ensuring the utmost safety when conducting excavation work and adhering to safe dig practices is of paramount importance. We cannot overstate the significance of following these practices to protect yourselves, your colleagues, and our valuable assets. Please take note of the following bullet points which emphases the critical nature of safe dig practices:

- Prioritise the thorough review of utility drawings included in your job pack. Familiarise yourself with the precise locations of utilities to minimise the risk of accidental damage.
- Develop a deep understanding of the potential routes of unmapped utilities. Never underestimate the possibility of encountering these hidden assets during excavation.
- Always bear in mind that unmapped utilities may intersect with our excavation area. Exercise caution and consider their presence throughout the digging process.
- Utilise the knowledge and resources available on-site, including utility layout plans and information about utility connections to adjacent properties. These tools will aid in estimating the probable locations of these assets.

Stop, take a minute, think…….

- Exercise utmost care when excavating around high-risk areas. Take into account the gathered information and proceed with caution to avoid any potential damage or incidents.

- Conduct a comprehensive trace, including the connection to nearby lamp columns. Leave no stone unturned in identifying any buried utilities that may be present.
- Pay close attention to scars or signs that may indicate the presence of buried plant or other assets. These visual indicators are crucial in identifying utilities that may not be immediately evident.

- Perform a thorough 200mm retrace to identify any cables or utilities that may have gone undetected at the surface level. Do not overlook this essential step – leave no room for uncertainty – this meticulous approach is essential for accurate detection.
- Prior to utilising a mechanical excavator, it is imperative to conduct trial holes. These preliminary excavations help ensure safety and minimise the risk of damage.
- Use the full length of a shovel head to softly probe into the ground going horizontally across the area, if any resistance is found hand dig next to the area and tunnel towards the area until the blockage has been identified. Repeat the sequence until the full excavation depth has been achieved.
- Take utmost care in nulling out utility signals to confirm their precise locations. This meticulous process provides certainty and minimises the risk of accidents.
- Never solely reply on power and radio modes for utility detection. Always utilize multiple detection methods and cross-reference the results to maximise accuracy.
- Reduce the risk of accidental damage by excavating in parallel to traced lines. Avoid direct excavation directly on top of the marked-up utilities as this significantly increases the likelihood of striking them.

IF IN DOUBT STOP – CONSULT WITH YOUR MCANDREW SITE AGENT / HSEQ TEAM