

High Potential Near Miss Incident – Excavation Safety

Summary of Incident

A two-person civils sub-contractor team attended site to undertake the excavation (approximately 70 metres) and repositioning (duct slewing) of existing four-way telecommunication ducts to allow for the entrance to a service station to be constructed.

An alternative network telecommunication service provider (third party) had recently undertaken the repositioning of their asset within proximity to our works; with the resulting excavated material being positioned in an area of approximately 800mm between the two excavation locations.

On starting to excavate the two-person civils sub-contractor placed their excavated material on top of the third-party spoil heap along the 70 metre track.

Once completed the team commenced repositioning the four-way ducts, when a piece of tarmac fell away from the side of the excavation (between the two working areas) making contact with the right calf of the IP coming to rest against the exposed four-way ducts.

Other Factors

The tarmac between the two work areas was undermined and with the significant loading of excavated material created an unsafe working condition for the working party.

The construction site operating heavy plant to grade and compact the adjacent roadway causing a vibration factor to already unstable ground.

Learning Points

- Always assess your working area, identify all associated hazards, and implement appropriate control measures and record via the on-site/ point of work risk assessment app
- All excavated material shall be suitably positioned to prevent increased side loading and materials falling into the excavation
- Implement and install protective systems (Benching, Sloping, Shoring, Shielding) where required to prevent trench collapse
- Always consider how other people's work activities impact and increase the risk to your working environment
- **If unsure, Stop Work and Ask!**

