

Incident Description

A near miss occurred on Wednesday 7th March 2018 when an open excavation collapsed on site at the A14 improvement project in Cambridgeshire. The works included the excavation of a trial hole to identify the position of existing gas services,. A contributing factor was that the ground was also very wet following recent heavy snow/rain.

The excavation to expose the services had been completed and steel shuttering sheets were installed around the trial hole. This installation was incomplete and not in accordance with the temporary works design. No pre- access inspections had been carried out. An Investigation into this incident is now underway.

There was no one was present in the excavation at the time of the collapse, and there were fortunately no injuries. However, the photographs below demonstrate the potential severity of this type of incident.



Photograph of the collapse taken on 07 March 2018.



Photographs taken on 05 March 2018 of UKPN contractor within the excavation.

Immediate Actions Taken:

- Work was immediately suspended and an exclusion zone set up around the incident area.
- An Industry Alert has been issued by UKPN.
- Investigations have commenced.

Root Cause:

- The temporary excavation supports were not installed as designed.
- Lack of inspection by a competent person prior to access/use.
- Lack of understanding/consideration of the potential impact that the poor weather conditions will have on an open excavation(s).

Actions to Prevent Re Occurrence:

- Safety Stand Down and re start induction/ briefings have now been carried out.
- A full review of the Safe Systems of Work is being carried out.
- When temporary works are installed They shall be constructed in accordance with the agreed design and inspected on completion (and prior to use).
- An inspection by a competent person shall be completed and recorded at the start of each shift, and after any event that may have affected strength or stability, such as heavy rain or following prolonged dry periods or change in traffic management.