INFORMATION

Safety Alert

Working on Verges

29 June 2022

The following page of this safety alert was issued by:

Kier

If you have any queries about this safety alert information announcement or any other safety announcement then please contact HealthSafety&Wellbeingteam@nationalhighways.co.uk

SHE ALERT

SHE H207 A 2022)
Issued by: Kier Highways SHE Department
Date: 15/06/2022

Working on verges

What Happened?

The IP was working ahead of a surface dressing train in rural Norfolk. He stepped into the verge to allow mobile plant to pass and fell 1.2m into the headwall of a drainage system. He suffered 2 fractured vertebrae and heavy bruising to his spine and muscles.

The verge was overgrown, and the drainage ditch is only visible due to a change in height of the vegetation. The headwall was overgrown with thick vegetation making it hard to see. The headwall was located only 700mm off the edge of the road with no fall protection.

We cannot always control where we must work but we can reduce the risk of injury due to slips, trips and falls.

What can you do to avoid a similar incident?

Managers/Team leaders/Supervisors:

- Plan works to avoid the need to access the verge on foot where possible.
- Consider robotic or remote-control methods to complete verge tasks.
- Provide known asset information to gangs prior to works commencing – look for possible hidden permanent hazards such as manholes, gullies, cables, etc.
- Check the verge, clearly mark hazards and record on the site-specific RA – ensure the gang are briefed on all hazards.
- Arrange for vegetation to be cut back and debris collected before any works on the verge commence.
- If working at night provide suitable task lighting.

Everyone:

- Visually check the verge before entering it to identify hidden dips, holes, debris and general conditions not already briefed to you.
- Record any additional hazards on your POWRA and ensure everyone working on site are aware of them.
- If grass/vegetation obscures vision then take extra care; test the ground with a pole or long handled tool to identify soft spots, holes etc, place each step softly at first to test if support is where you expect it to be.
- Avoid stepping on covers and lids – they may not take your weight. If you must step on them, check they can take your weight and are stable before stepping onto them.
- Clear the working area of slip/trip hazards before starting work and keep it clear during work activities.
- If the verge is soft, wet, or muddy, use matting or granular material to provide a stable work area.
- Try to avoid having to step or walk backwards on the verge.
- Check the condition of your footwear each day and get it replaced if worn or damaged. Regularly clear the soles of mud or things that may cause you to slip
- Ensure your boots are properly laced up so that they provide your ankle with support.
- Remain alert to changing conditions, take your time and stop work if conditions become unsafe.

Remember – Nothing is so urgent or important that we cannot take the time to do it safely!

Additional training resources: https://vimeo.com/656189277/d3abb2799e
SHEMS-TBT-HIG-049

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Safety Health Environment
It's in our hands