

Safety Alert

Missing Inspection Chamber Cover

5th March 2019

Background information

- There was a grass cutting closure on the Southbound M6 between Junction 33 to Forton services. The grass cutting contractors (Ashlea) observed that there was an unprotected manhole, an inspection chamber, in the verge and they immediately reported this to the Highways England Inspector.
- The Highways England Inspector attended the site and found the hole, an inspection chamber and then eventually found the cover a couple of metres away. He replaced the cover over the hole to make safe. Both the manhole and cover had been hidden by the long grass.
- It is unknown how or why the cover became removed from the inspection chamber, however this had the potential to expose contractors, Traffic Officers, members of the public and Highways England Inspectors at risk of a fall from height into the hidden inspection chamber.
- Whilst manhole/inspection chamber covers should always be in place and secure sometimes they can become damaged or are missing. Always remain vigilant and aware especially where grass is long or natural flora has grown.
- Do not attempt to re-fit a man hole cover if it is heavy and/or you do not have the correct equipment. Note the exact location and report to Maintenance and Response contractor to attend.

The exposed drop, down the manhole was at least a couple of metres, with metal steps protruding from the walls.

