

Safety Alert

Network Defects

4 February 2022

Background information

A National Highways Traffic Officer suffered an injury to their right leg and knee after moving a traffic cone and falling into an exposed gulley chamber. The traffic officer was attending to a broken-down vehicle on an at grade over bridge on the A1(M). The traffic officer moved the cone by attempting to push/slide it up onto the verge, whilst doing so, they stepped into the location where the cone had been. The cone had been placed by an unknown person on top of a defective gulley chamber without a cover. This defective gulley chamber had NOT been reported to National Highways.

During the investigation the following was highlighted:

- The traffic officer was not aware that cones are used to mark / identify a range of network defects
- The defect had NOT been reported to National Highways
- The current highways inspection approach does not include checking single cones on the network
- An unknown person has placed the cone on the defect and not reported it



Lessons Learnt

- Supply chain to be aware of the process for notifying defects on the network (in the first instance - **contact the Regional Operations Centre (ROC) and report defect and its location**).
- National Highways is reviewing the network inspection regime to include further investigation of single cones placed on the network.
- National Highways is reviewing the method used for marking defects on the network, ensuring adequate protection of the defect.
- When working on the network, ensure due care and attention is given to your surroundings AND any task you are undertaking. Remain vigilant at all times.