TOOLBOX TALK

Before You Dig: Underground Services

Topic	Before You Dig: Underground Services	Attendees	0

WHAT WE TALKED ABOUT

Hitting a buried power cable or gas main can kill you instantly or start a fire. Even a fibre or water line strike can cost thousands and shut down a street. Every dig starts with finding out what is in the ground.

1. Lodge a free enquiry with Before You Dig Australia (BYDA) before any digging, and get plans from every asset owner. Check the plans are current and cover the whole dig area.
2. Plans are a guide only. Services move, depths change, and private lines are often not on any plan.
3. Have services located and marked on site by a qualified locator before breaking ground. Plans alone are not enough.
4. Share the plans and the marks with everyone on the dig, including the machine operator and any subcontractors, before work starts.
5. Keep the marks visible. If rain, traffic or digging wipes them out, stop and get them re-marked.
6. Hand dig or vacuum excavate near any located service to expose it before using machines.
7. Look for clues: meter boxes, pits, lids, street lights and patched pavement all point to buried services.
8. Keep the plans and locate records on site and in date.
9. If you strike a service: stop, keep everyone back, and call the asset owner straight away.
10. For a gas strike: move everyone away and upwind, no smoking or ignition sources, call 000 and the gas network. Never try to fix or plug the pipe yourself.
11. If a machine hits a power cable, the operator stays in the cab and everyone else keeps well back until the network says it is safe.
12. Never fill in or cover a damaged service, even a small nick in the coating. Report it so it can be repaired properly.

QUESTIONS FOR THE CREW

1. Do we have current service plans for this dig?
2. Which services are close to where we are digging today?
3. How close can the machine get before we switch to hand digging?
4. What would you do if we hit a gas line?
5. Who has the locate records, and does everyone on the dig know where they are?

Reference: WHS Regulations r.304 (Excavation work, underground essential services information)

RUN BY

	Name	Signature	Date	
Presenter				

ATTENDANCE

Name	Role / company	Signature	Date

Name	Role / company	Signature	Date

Keep this record with your site safety file.