

ASP Safety Alert

ASP Compliance and Practices



Alert Number: SA02_17

Subject: Failure to positively identify gas main causing gas main damage

23 March 2017

Key Messages

Ensure all underground services are positively located, if you are unable to find the asset contact the asset owner

An ASP1 crew were attempting to install an earthing system associated with a proposed high voltage UGOH when they hit a medium pressure gas main.

The workers had located all other services and could not positively identify the polyethylene gas main because:

- they assumed the gas main alignment shown on the DBYD plans was correct
- there was no trace wire associated with the polyethylene gas main (therefore their signal generator could not locate the gas main)
- they assumed the gas main had been installed in an underbore through rock, because they had not been able to locate the gas main

The gas main owner was contacted immediately and when the response crew arrived onsite they determined the repairs would be carried out by bypassing the damaged section of gas main and maintain supply to existing customers.

The gas workers also experienced delays in locating the gas main to install the bypass. The weather conditions had changed and light rain created a Coroner effect around the 33KV overhead mains which ignited the escaped gas. This caused a large fire ball and fire in the surrounding area.

The 33KV feeder overhead mains tripped and reclosed immediately. The gas flame continued to burn until the gas workers isolated the mains. There were no injuries, however, there was significant damage to the following:

- an Ausgrid pole, which was subsequently replaced
- ASP1 machinery and power tools
- school fencing
- a traffic sign

Emergency services arrived onsite and extinguished the remaining fire.

The ASP1 workers should have considered the requirements of DBYD plans, Ausgrid's NS116 and NS130, SafeWork's *Work near underground assets guide 2007* and the ASP1's own SWMS which indicated the following:

- positively identify underground assets
- DBYD plans do not detail the exact location of assets
- contact the asset owner if their **asset cannot be located**
- never guess or assume



Extent of damage



Fire damage and repairs to Ausgrid pole

Ausgrid
Project Officers