



HSSA 0925: Safety During Works Adjacent to a Public Highway

Why is action required:

A high potential (HiPo) near miss occurred recently during flushing following a water mains repair.



Who is required to take action:

Water network inspectors, asset surveyors, any role that works in or adjacent to the public highway.

Action required by: 24/12/2025

Summary:

A Water Networks FPM and a WN Inspector were flushing from the hydrant following a 6" mains repair undertaken by a Delivery Partner. Whilst in the grass verge with their backs to the road, a car drove past at 40mph+ within 1 metre of them. No injuries were sustained but the driver did not appear to be in complete control of their vehicle as they drove into a ditch after passing the WN personnel before 'fishtailing' at high speed down the road.

The SW employees were wearing their high-visibility PPE which may have prevented them from being struck. The SW vans were parked with beacons flashing, albeit on the opposite side of the road to where the work was being carried out therefore affording no physical protection. Traffic management had been put in place by a second Delivery Partner for unrelated works but it did not provide adequate protection for the SW employees.

Action required:

1. Position the work vehicle(s) to protect the workforce wherever possible during short duration works and ensure roof-mounted amber beacons are on at all times.
2. Wear Class 3 high visibility jacket (two bar, long sleeves) and trousers at all times when working on or near the public highway.
3. When working in a Delivery Partners work area, do not assume that their traffic management arrangements will be suitable to protect you. Ensure that you make yourself known to the person in charge of the works so that a risk assessment can be carried out which takes into account any interfaces and additional risks.
4. Carry out a risk assessment using *SMS408 Short Duration Streetworks Checklist* to determine if the works qualify as 'short duration' or whether full signing, lighting and guarding is required.
5. Review the *Southern Water Streetworks Procedure* (SMS122) and ensure that you are compliant with the requirements e.g. NRSWA qualified, in possession of minimum equipment necessary to set up a site etc.



Further information:

Streetworks Procedure (SMS122)

Short Duration Streetworks Checklist (SMS408)

New Roads and Street Works Act 1991

Safety at Street Works and Road Works - A Code of Practice

If you need any more information, please contact your local HSW Advisor.

[Health, Safety, Security & Wellbeing Team](#)