

UKOPA SAFETY ALERT

Crude Oil pipeline Easement incident July 2010

The incident.

An excavation was found to be within 300mm of a 28" dia crude oil pipeline located within the boundary of a water treatment works. The excavation had been carried out to erect a new electrified perimeter fence within the existing security fence around the site to improve security. A sub contractor working on behalf of the owner and operator of the site was carrying out the work.

Findings:

The pipeline is subject to regular surveillance by road patrol and by air as part of the risk management process.

It was discovered that several excavations for fencing posts had been made within the pipeline easement. The nearest excavation was found to be within 300mm of the pipeline.

The contravention was raised with the site subcontractor and the site operator and work was stopped until an agreed work method was in place.

The site owner/operator were found to have comprehensive procedures for searching for buried services, these procedures were found not to have been correctly followed.

The sub contractor had utilised a cat scanner to carry out a buried services examination prior to the excavations, the pipeline had been located but had been assumed to be a buried water pipe.

Pipeline markers were in the close vicinity to the excavations.



Learning

1. Ensure landowners have adequate records of services. The Operator of the site did not have correct records of all buried services that were not their own, despite being made aware annually of these services.
2. If pipelines are expected do not assume the ones found are necessarily the ones expected to be found.
3. Take note of pipeline markers and information contained within them. Don't make assumptions
4. Ensure aerial and ground vantage point surveillance procedures are adequate to identify this type of work. Take particular note of sudden changes in directions of pipelines and where only a short route of the pipeline is within a section of 3rd party land