

Health and Safety Briefing Note



HSBN Number 0068: NO opening of observation grids that are above the size of 1.00 m x 40 cm above water, whilst lone working.

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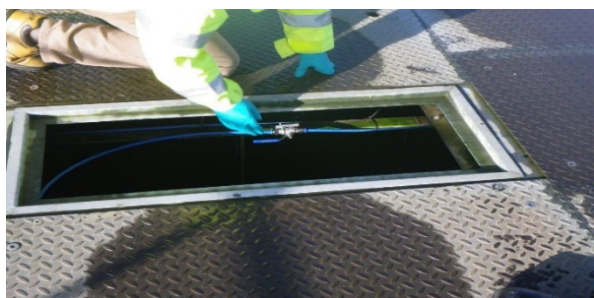
Distribution: Thames Water Managers & Contractors

Introduction:

Following the recent health and safety stand down highlighting the tragic death of a catchment operator at South West Water who drowned while manning a sand filtration unit whilst working alone. This briefing note has been prepared to reiterate that there is to be **NO opening of observation grids that are or above the size of 1.00m x 40cm above water whilst lone working** in Thames Water.

What Happened?

Whilst working alone the operator removed a **1.00m x 40cm** observation grid on top of the sand filtration unit to access and inspect the waste-water filter underneath. After the removal of the grid, the operator slipped and fell drowning in the water below.



This incident resulted in the tragic loss of a colleague and a fine of £1.8 million to the Client operating company having pleaded guilty to breaching the Health and Safety at Work Act “**general duties of employers to their employees**”

Action required

Thames Water has assessed and defined a number of activities that are prohibited when working alone in company standard [HSP 8 - Lone working](#). This includes any work over deep or fast flowing water. Therefore whenever a barrier between yourself and the water is removed, found to be faulty or missing the resulting work must not be performed alone.

Zero Compromise - It is essential that you do not place yourselves, your teams or anyone at risk. Hence with **immediate effect** Managers **MUST** ensure that the following are reiterated:

- All activities that require the opening of observation grids, gratings or covers that are above the size of 1.00m x 40cm above water whilst lone working are **PROHIBITED**.
- The activity **MUST** be monitored to ensure that it is being undertaken safely using the Task observation checklist SHE6A



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Briefing to ALL Employees

- The opening of observation grids that are above the size of 1.00m x 40cm above water **MUST not be conducted by lone workers.**
- Prior to work starting a point of work risk assessment SHE 5 **MUST** be carried out.
- Do not start work if you identify a serious risk to health and safety.
- Report serious risks to health and safety immediately to your line manager.
- Always be aware of the surrounding's and where your colleague is at all times.
- Remember you have the right to stop work where an activity cannot be undertaken safely.

We the undersigned have been made aware of the contents of this briefing. If we are unable to carry out the work safely, we agree that we must immediately stop work and inform our manager/supervisor.

Date	Name	Signature	
Manager/supervisor's signature:		Date:	

Please continue on another copy for additional employees