

**ESSENTIAL  
STANDARD  
no.15**

# Protecting the Public during Temporary Work Activities



## KEY MESSAGES

- Ensure that any areas where there is legitimate public access are kept safe.
- Ensure good management of visitors.
- Consider vulnerable groups who may need special attention.

### 1. Introduction

Thames Water and its Partner Organisations carry out thousands of activities each year such as construction, tankering and deliveries. Hazards associated with these activities can cause risks not only to people working on our sites. In the UK every year, children and other members of the public are killed or injured by work activities that are not adequately controlled. The key issues for public safety are:



- Hazards that cause risks to the public



- Management of site access



- Vulnerable groups

There are many occasions, especially during network operations, where construction sites are exposed to high risk areas such as public highways. It is imperative that members of the public and the workforce are both provided with suitable protection.

### 2. Control of Hazards Causing Risk to the Public

When establishing a site the following hazards must be considered, all of which have the potential to injure or harm the public:



- **Delivery and other site vehicles:**  
Make sure pedestrians cannot be struck by vehicles accessing the site. For example, make sure the footpath is not obstructed during deliveries



- **Storing or stacking materials:**  
Store materials in a fenced off area and away from the fence line



- **Excavations and openings:**  
Use covers and barriers to prevent people from falling into excavations and manholes



- **Falling objects:**  
Ensure that people are protected from falling objects, for example objects falling from vehicles or structures



- **Plant, machinery and equipment:**  
Immobilise and secure the keys of any plant, machinery or equipment on site



- **Slips, trips and falls:**  
Keep pedestrian areas free of trailing leads and other obstructions and protect any openings so they don't cause slips, trips or falls



- **Dust, noise and vibration:**  
Consider using alternative work methods such as a guillotine instead of disc cutters, or use water suppression

### 3. Managing Site Access

#### Visitors

Where work activities are taking place there will be planned and unplanned visitors. Follow these rules at all times to ensure their safety:



- Take reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised access to the site



- Provide authorised people with essential safety information and relevant site rules



- Properly control authorised access to the site, for example all visitors should report their arrival



- Do not allow visitors and workers to walk around unaccompanied, unless they are familiar with the site and its risks

Take extra precautions in high risk areas such as excavations to protect people working on site, visitors and anyone else who might get in.

### 4. Vulnerable Groups

Give special consideration to the elderly, children and people with certain disabilities. Children might find work areas to be exciting places to play. They must be kept out of the site and away from danger.

To ensure child safety, take the following steps:



- Adequately secure the site when work for the day is finished



- Place barriers or covers over excavations and pits



- Isolate and immobilise vehicles and plant and if possible, lock them in a compound



- Store building materials such as pipes, manhole rings and cement bags in a way that they can't topple or roll over



- Remove access ladders from excavations and scaffolds



- Lock hazardous substances away