

Learning Bulletin – Member of Public – Cuts and bruising from falling over

What Happened?

An elderly member of the public narrowly escaped serious injury after tripping on a 'wobbly' footway board and falling to the ground.

He received bruising to his nose and knee as well as grazes and cuts to his fingers and chin.

He is registered blind and was taking a walk with his guide dog when the incident happened.



Why did it really happen?

A dig team had installed a meter box and backfilled the excavation ready for the tarmac reinstatement the following Monday. The excavation was covered with a rubber edged footway board for the weekend. The footway was uneven and sloped from the garden wall to the roadside gully, which left a trip hazard of approx. 30mm.

The team took photos of the site and left.

What can I do differently?

- Check to see if boards sit flush, before digging. If okay, proceed as normal
- If boards are 'wobbly' and not obviously bowed or in poor condition, temporary barriers or sand bags are to be placed out, whilst maintaining 1.2m clearance, or as per permit conditions
- If temporary barriers cannot be used, place some temporary tarmac underneath to level out the footway board and make secure.
- Managers & Supervisors are to revisit the site as the team leaves and check that they are secure and take photos if required of the secured footway board
- If the first three cannot be met, a joint inspection is to be carried out with Highway Authority to discuss the condition of the footway and if necessary, abort the dig