

# Medical Device/Equipment ALERT

Ref. MDEA(NI)2005/72

Issued: 19 October 2005

For:

IMMEDIATE ACTION	
<b>ACTION</b>	✓
UPDATE	
INFORMATION	



**NORTHERN  
IRELAND  
ADVERSE  
INCIDENT  
CENTRE**

	Section
<b>Medical Device/Equipment:</b> Natural Gas Supply Distribution Pipework	▶ ①
<b>Problem:</b> Underground natural gas supply pipe ruptured during construction excavations.	▶ ②
<b>Action by:</b> Estates Managers	▶ ③
<b>Action:</b> Enforce strict working procedures on contractors/sub-contractors when conducting excavation works. A robust safe system of work is essential using a Permit to Work system, with all underground services identified prior to excavation.	▶ ④
<b>Distributed by NIAIC to:</b> Chief Executive of each HSS Board Chief Executive of each HSS Trust Chief Executive of each Agency NIAIC Liaison Officers	▶ ⑤
<b>Contacts</b> Details of NIAIC contacts for technical aspects.	▶ ⑥
<b>Feedback Requirements to NIAIC</b> None Required	▶ ⑦

This Alert is on our web site: <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/niaic>

## 1. DEVICE/EQUIPMENT:

Natural gas supply distribution pipework

## 2. PROBLEM:

Recently a contractor was excavating for drainage in the vicinity of a directionally dug gas main and despite following careful procedures, ruptured the gas main. The drawings provided by the gas supplier did show the position of the main but it was found approximately 1 metre deeper than indicated. As the main was directionally dug there was no blinding or warning/tracer tape laid. The gas supplier's drawings are provided for indication purposes and carry a disclaimer notice regarding accuracy.

## 3. ACTION BY:

Estates Managers and Estates Staff

## 4. ACTION:

Prior to and during excavation works Estates Departments should apply a Safe System of Work as described in the Health and Safety Executive publication "Avoiding Danger from Underground Services – HSG 47". Such a Safe System of Work should include:

- Prior identification of all underground services through liaison with utility suppliers
- A method statement and risk assessment drawn up for the purposes of the CDM Regulations including appropriate preventative measures necessary to limit the possibility of damage during excavation and emergency actions to be taken in the event of damage to a hospital service.
- Prior notification of the intended work and risks to appropriate hospital staff
- An excavation permit issued by the Estates Department
- The provision and use of appropriate PPE to all work operatives

**For services that may not be identified by blinding and warning/tracer tape, excavation should be completed by hand digging only until the service is exposed.**

With specific reference to Natural Gas supply pipework:

- Phoenix Natural Gas operate a Dial Before You Dig Service – Telephone No. 02890 55819
- In the event of a Natural Gas Emergency – Telephone No. 0800 002001
- Phoenix Gas also offers a service where their Plant Protection Officer will visit the site and identify gas main locations and provide pipe location drawings.

Health and Safety Guidance Publications can be obtained from The Stationary Office (NI), 16 Arthur St, BELFAST BT1 4GD.

## 5. ONWARD DISTRIBUTION TO:

Please bring this notice to the attention of all who need to know or be aware of it. This will include distribution to:

- Liaison Officers
- Risk Managers
- Health & Safety Officers/Advisors
- Estates Managers
- Independent Health and Social Care Providers – Private Clinics, Residential and Nursing Homes through HSSRIA
- Fire Officers

## 6. CONTACTS:

Enquires to NIAIC should quote reference number MDEA(NI)2005/72 and be addressed to:  
Northern Ireland Adverse Incident Centre (NIAIC)

Health Estates  
Estate Policy Directorate  
Stoney Road  
Dundonald  
Belfast BT16 1US

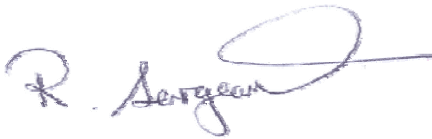
Tel: 028 9052 3868

Fax: 028 9052 3900

Email: NIAIC@dhsspsni.gov.uk

## 7. FEEDBACK:

None Required



Robert Sergeant  
NIAIC Operational Manager

### HOW TO REPORT ADVERSE INCIDENTS

Adverse Incidents relating to medical devices, non-medical equipment, plant and buildings should be reported to NIAIC as soon as possible. Advice on how to report is given in MDEA(NI)2005/01. If you are in doubt about how to report incidents, please speak to your liaison officer or contact NIAIC using the telephone number provided. Adverse Incident reporting forms and an on-line reporting facility are available on the NIAIC website at [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/niaic](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/niaic)

*Heath Estates is an Executive Agency of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety*