



## Sandstone Pillar Collapses onto Footpath



*Pillar [Google Maps]*



*Pillar after the Incident*

This express highlights a recent near miss where a sandstone pillar collapsed across the footpath. Fortunately no injuries were sustained.

A Service Partner had carried out the required excavation work in the footpath to enable the removal of two previously un-recorded 3 phase services. After completing the excavation work, the spoil was removed from site and the joint bay covered with plates. Before leaving site, the Service Partner erected the required barriers which included a temporary footpath.

The next day, SPEN jointers arrived on site to find that a large sandstone pillar had collapsed across the excavation, with the top section lying on the edge of the carriageway.

The initial findings from this investigation have highlighted that this structure (pillar) was a free standing pillar and it was not tied or keyed into the adjacent property or garden wall.

This is the third incident. where a wall or structure has collapsed or fallen on or into our excavations in the last 3 years. (see previous safety expresses [EXP-10-334](#) and [EXP-10-388](#)).

**All of these incidents had the potential to cause a serious injury or a fatality.**

### Recommendations

- **Ensure you understand the risks associated with the work activity.** Many garden or boundary walls have very shallow foundations, which can be affected by vibration from work equipment such as jack hammers and mechanical excavators.
- **Assess and control the risks.** Never begin any excavation if your START assessment highlights that a wall or structure could become a hazard.
- **Think before you act.** Continually monitor your working environment and surroundings for new risks. Look out for each other and work as a team.
- **Only undertake work you are competent to do.** If shoring is required, then it must be erected by competent and trained operatives.



**Health and Safety Essentials**