HCC Highways Streetworks team have put together a briefing to explain how **UTILITY WORKS** are planned within our local areas.

STREETWORKS TEAM FAQ'S

Q: How can I see what works are planned in the County?

A: The County Council handles all permits via a National IT system. This system automatically publishes all permits on the https://one.network website.

Q: How can I contact the Streetworks team about problems with utility works ?

A: The best way to report site specific problems is via the 'report a road problem' page on the County Council's website. https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems . For more complex issues we would recommend asking your county councillor to raise the concern with the Streetworks Team.

Q: What is the Hampshire Highways Streetworks Team's role?

A: The Streetworks team is responsible for the coordination of all works and events on the public highway in order to minimise traffic disruption. The Streetworks team also monitors utility Co's activities on the public highway and checks active work sites and reinstatements for compliance with National specifications. The legal basis for these responsibilities comes from the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA) and the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA). The StreetWorks team is not responsible for works off the public highway and enquiries about County Council works, S278 or S38 works should be directed to your county councillor.

Q: Can utility companies legally work on the public highway?

A: Yes, they have legal duties and rights to install and maintain apparatus in the public highway from NRSWA. However, they have to comply with National Specifications and obtain a permit from the County Council for planned works. NRSWA and other legislation gives them legal rights to install cabinets and masts (up to 15m high) on the public highway without planning permission.

Q: Can HCC stop a utility company working on the public highway?

A: No, except under very specific circumstances, for example: were a utility company wants to install new apparatus on a highly important and strategic road that has been specifically designated, by law, as a protected street.

Q: What conditions can be placed on works on the public highway?

A: The County Council can place conditions on any permit application. Conditions are used to try to minimise traffic disruption. The conditions available as part of the permit scheme are not 'free form' and are restricted to controls over works timing, works area, traffic management type and stakeholder engagement. Conditions have to be reasonable and be able to be met by the works promoter.

Q: Who decides what type of traffic management (TM) to use?

A: The works promoter is entirely responsible for selecting the most appropriate type of TM. They are the experts in the works they are undertaking and what the risks are. In selecting the TM type they must consider the risks to the workforce, passing traffic (including pedestrians) and relevant legislation and Codes or Practice.

Q: Who decides what diversion routes to use when road closures are needed?

A: The works promoter is entirely responsible for selecting an appropriate diversion route. Best practice is to ensure that the diversion route uses similar roads to those closed. Unfortunately, the existing networks doesn't always permit this. Diversion routes are not enforceable.

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Q: Who is responsible for the information provided on the permit?

A: The works promoter is ALWAYS responsible for the information they supply. The County Council must assume that it is correct when assessing the permit and determining what conditions to apply.

Q: Does granting a permit mean that the County Council approves of the works / installation?

A: No, the permit relates ONLY to the works and its impact on traffic. Approval for installing apparatus is given either by a utility Co's legal rights, or via the local Planning Authority.

Q: I've seen a utility leave a blacktop reinstatement in a flagstone surface. Is this allowed?

A: Yes, NRSWA allows utility Co's to use a temporary reinstatement in order to re-open a road quickly or to give them time to source specialist materials. Normally temporary reinstatements are allowed for up to 6 months, but this duration can be extended if needed for engineering purposes.

Q: How long is a utility company responsible for its reinstatement?

A: Legislation states that a utility company is liable for any 'reasonable' repairs for two years.

Q: How much notice does the County get for works?

A: NRSWA requires all works promoters to submit permit applications between 3 working days and 3 months ahead of works starting. As follows;

- Minor works (works lasting up to 3 days) = 3 working days advance notice
- Standard works (works lasting between 4 and 10 days) = 10 working days advance notice
- Major works (works lasting over 10 days OR requiring a road closure) = 3 months
- Immediate works (relating to safety or loss of service) = No advance warning. Works are started and the County Council is alerted within 2 working hours.

Reduced advance warning periods can be agreed on a site by site basis.

Q: What penalties are applied for non-compliances?

A: The penalties are prescribed by legislation and can broadly fit into one of the following categories:

- Failing to comply with permit conditions = Fixed Penalty Notice
- Failing to comply with works specifications = Correct the non-compliance
- Overrunning agreed works durations without a valid reason = Significant daily charge
- Damaging the public highway = County Council effects repairs and recharges utility co.

Ultimately a works promoter can be taken to court for any non-compliance. But such measures are reserved for extremely serious situations.

Q: How well do utility companies comply with specifications and permit conditions?

A: Very well. In 2022 Over 95% of sites signage and 96% of reinstatements complied with the National specifications. 97% of utility sites comply with permit conditions. 99% of utility sites were completed on time, or early.

Q: How many utility works are undertaken on the County's network?

A: in the 2021/2022 financial year we processed 52,000 permit applications / changes from utility co's which resulted in 36,000 works being undertaken.

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