



**ROADS AUTHORITIES & UTILITIES COMMITTEE
(SCOTLAND)**

ADVICE NOTE 1

THE EXCHANGE OF PLANT INFORMATION

Version 3.2

19 February 2025

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Version History

Version	Date	Notes
1.00	Feb 1995	First published & RAUC(S) approved version.
2.00	July 2005	No notes.
3.00	Nov 2009	Updated ISBN for HSG47. Emphasised the fact that timescales are working days. Improved distinction of process between responding to SRWR community members and non-utility undertakers using the Dial before you Dig service. Cosmetic changes.
3.1	5 March 2014	Updated ISBN for HSG47. Enhanced description record sharing options, including VAULT. The response time for Dial before you Dig requests has been increased from 2 working days to 5 working days. Cosmetic changes. Approved by RAUC(S) on 5 March 2014.
3.2	15 November 2024	Updates recognising legislative changes to Vault and recommending data be shared using Vault.

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THE EXCHANGE OF PLANT INFORMATION

1. Introduction

The Scottish Road Works Register (SRWR) is used by all road works authorities and undertakers in Scotland. Data exchange within the system has grown rapidly with system facilities which trigger requests for plant information. This helps to satisfy the separate Health & Safety Executive (HSE) requirements to reasonably obtain such information before commencing excavations as described in HSE guidance HSG47 – Avoiding danger from underground services.

On a practical basis it is considered to be helpful to combine the two elements of satisfying the requirements of both the New Roads and Street Works Act (1991) (as amended by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019) and the HSE within one system. The system continues to support the Dial before you Dig facility whereby non-utility excavators can obtain a rapid response from the roads authorities and undertakers regarding underground plant information.

Please note that this document does not in any way intend to replace the HSG47 document and should be used in conjunction with it.

2. Health & Safety

It is the works promoter's responsibility to ensure that excavators are supplied with all of the appropriate information about buried plant which may be affected by the proposed works. Experience has shown, however, that the availability of plant information cannot in itself assure the avoidance of plant damage and the use of detection equipment is highly recommended, as is the adoption of safe digging practices.

Four main elements should normally be fulfilled to satisfy the basic health and safety requirements in undertaking excavation works as described in HSG47. These are as follows:

- Plans or other appropriate information about buried plant should be **available to those undertaking the excavation work.**
- Work must be carried out and supervised by properly accredited/qualified personnel.
- Digging practices are safe and appropriate to the location.

- Make proper use of detection equipment for pinpointing the position of all plant and, particularly, hazardous plant.

More detailed advice is given in the HSE publication HSG47 - Avoiding danger from underground services (ISBN 978 0 7176 6584 6), which can be downloaded free from the HSE here:

[Avoiding danger from underground services - HSG47](#)

It is recognised that in emergency circumstances, work may have to be undertaken without the top bullet point above being fulfilled. For all other categories of work, plant information plans must be available as per HSG47.

It is considered appropriate that for Emergency and Urgent Works in particular the use of textual information may be adequate. The use of this method will facilitate quicker responses to requests for information. The onus is on the promoter of work to request the type of information which they require.

3. Record Sharing

Record sharing is an important safety issue for all roads authorities and undertakers carrying out works in the road.

It is strongly recommended all roads authorities and undertakers endeavour to allow electronic access to their plant records (preferably with a quick turnaround, not convoluted and user friendly online process). It is now a legal requirement for this information to be provided for display directly on the SRWR mapping system using the Community Apparatus Data Vault (Vault). Vault allows the display of information from multiple organisation's GIS systems on one screen at the same time. Further information can be found in the Community Apparatus Data Vault FAQ here:

[Community Apparatus Data Vault - Frequently Asked Questions | Scottish Road Works Commissioner](#)

This information can also be provided using various systems, such as maps sent by email, access to websites or even physical CDs containing the data. Drawings should be clear, legible, in colour and to a maximum scale of 1:500.

4. Requesting Plant Information using the SRWR

When requesting information through the SRWR it is the responsibility of the promoter to determine the type of plant response which they require. As a guide it is generally considered that the following will be generally appropriate:

- Emergency and Urgent works text/plans
- Minor works (with excavation) plans
- Standard works plans
- Major works plans

4.1 Requests from SRWR community members

Where the SRWR system is used, the promoter should specify one of the following:

- A plan showing plant information is required: 10 working days must be allowed for plans to be returned by the responding organisations. This procedure will allow the proposal and its plant response to be easily matched to the SRWR notice.
- Textual information will suffice: The proposer must allow 7 working days for a textual return by the responding organisations. Responding organisations may choose to respond with a plan if they consider the proposed works are sensitive in relation to their plant. In such a case the responding organisations must send a textual response within 7 working days advising the promoter that plans will follow within 10 working days of the original Notice date.
- Nil return (i.e. no plant information response anticipated): For example where an organisation’s apparatus is not affected by proposed works a textual response should be sent stating this.
- In cases where the proposer has access to electronic plans or where the responding organisation wishes the proposed to use data in Vault, it will be assumed this alternate method will be used and a response is optional.

4.2 Requests through the Dial before you Dig service

Third party excavators (i.e. someone who intends to excavate but doesn’t have access to the SRWR or other mechanisms to gather plant information described above) requesting information can do so through the Dial before you Dig service.

The Dial before you Dig operator will take the location details from the requester, along with their contact details and record this information on the SRWR as a Plant

Information Request. If your organisation receives one of these requests the time taken to respond to these requests should not exceed 5 working days. **Responses must be sent directly to the requester and not sent through the SRWR.** Bear in mind that the requestor does not have access to the register and cannot see any Comments recorded against their request or view any information stored in Vault.

To encourage use of the Dial before you Dig service you are requested to pass details of the service to any non-utility excavators who come to your organisation asking for plant information or a related service (e.g. a road opening permit). Copies of a flyer with these details can be found on the Scottish Road Work Commissioner’s website.

5. Summary of Response Times

The maximum response times to requests for plant information are as follows:

- Emergency/Urgent works as soon as possible.
- Dial before you Dig request not exceeding 5 working days.
- Textual response not exceeding 7 working days.
- Plans response not exceeding 10 working days.

6. Summary of Recommended Practice

There is no prescribed format for the presentation of plant information to intending excavators.

Plant Information: Except where impractical, always obtain plant information in accordance with HSG47.

Sharing of Plant Records: The most efficient means of obtaining plant information is for organisations to share their information online, preferably using VAULT. Records should be maintained and be as up to date as possible.