

Shopping Precinct Hydro-Excavation

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Jetcut was recently asked to provide a method for safely finding the exact location of underground services in one of Perth's busiest shopping centres.

When expanding any existing large building, there are always problems associated with digging up areas for new foundations. Often these areas have major underground services running through them.

Digging around services with standard earthmoving equipment can be fraught with dangers. Gas, water and sewerage pipes, power cables and telecoms services that run through the ground provide construction companies and maintenance crews major headaches. This is true even when their location is known. When there is no information about services locations there is potential for serious incidents or even fatalities.

Dial before you dig can provide the location of services (if they are logged,

not always the case for older sites) but this does not help you to excavate them safely.

Hydro excavation is a technique using water (or air) to fluidise the soil and a vacuum unit to suck up the slurry produced by the process. The vacuum unit is a tip truck so emptying the unit is simple and quick.

Removal rates using this technique are far higher than hand digging, requires only a crew of two people, reduces the risk of injury associated with manual labour and is especially useful when digging perimeter or new service trenches.

For new foundations a perimeter can be dug out to the depth required for the slab. If services are found in the trench, these are exposed using hydro-excavation. If no services are found, the foundation can be dug using standard earthmoving equipment.

