

**1 PURPOSE**

This procedure sets out the VolkerRail management arrangements for the protection of personnel and infrastructure against buried service strikes.

It underpins the general engineering and safety arrangements detailed within the VolkerRail Integrated Management System.

**2 SCOPE**

This procedure applies to all planning and delivery functions of the works that involve personnel working on site, including subcontracting organisations. Specifically, this includes the works associated with penetrating the ground at or below surface level, including works in the ballast box. Or loading the ground, such as the provision of stockpiles or the use of heavy plant on unbound road surfaces.

This procedure is not required for the tamping of ballast but notes that safe working procedures will be a requirement.

**3 REFERENCES**

**Legislation and HSE Guidance**

- The Construction, Design and Management Regulations 2015
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- HSG47 Avoiding Danger from Underground Services
- HSG 144 The Safe use of Vehicles on Construction Sites
- PAS 128:2022 (BSI) Underground Utility detection, verification and location specification.

**Network Rail Standards**

- NR/L2/INI/02009                      Engineering Management for Projects
- NR/L2/OHS/1030                      Working Safely in the Vicinity of Buried Services.
- NR/L2/CIV/003                      Engineering Assurance of Design and Construction of Building and Civil Engineering Infrastructure
- NR/L3/ELP/22001                      Procedure and competence requirements for persons undertaking work in the vicinity of high voltage cables

**VolkerRail Procedures**

- SAF64 - Confined Space Entry and working
- SAF88 - Working Safely at Height
- CIV510 - The Management of Temporary Works
- ENG01M011 – Managing Engineering Competency for Projects

**4 ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS**

Term / Abbreviation	Description
Ballast Box	The zone which is 500mm out from the sleeper ends and to a depth of 225mm below the bottom of the sleeper, as described in NR/L2/OHS/1030 – Appendix F.
Buried Service Planner	The role responsible for creating the safe system of work for an activity that involves breaking ground
Buried Service Surveyor	The role responsible for site walkout, CAT scanning and service identification.

Issue no:	5	Date:	08/06/2026	Parent document:	IMS Element 9.26
Approved for IMS:	IMS Manager	Document owner:	Technical Director - Engineering	Page 1 of 10	

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Term / Abbreviation	Description
Electromagnetic Locator EML	Also known as a Cable Avoidance Tool which detects buried services via a hand-held receiver. It uses electromagnetic and radio frequency signals that are present in metallic services as a result of current flow or re-transmitted low frequency radio signals (passive EML)
CDM	Construction, Design and Management regulations 2015
CEM	The appointed person within each design and/or construction organisation contracted to Network Rail, (or to a party other than Network Rail where agreed with Network Rail) with overall accountability for all that organisation's engineering activities applicable to that specific CR-T; including those undertaken by subcontracted organisations.
Client	The organisation that has employed VolkerRail to undertake the work. e.g. Network Rail where VolkerRail act as the main contractor or Balfour Beatty where VolkerRail act as a sub-contractor.
CRE	Contractor's Responsible Engineer. The Engineer fulfilling the role as defined in Network Rail Standard NR/L2/INI/02009 Engineering Management for Projects who shall be responsible for safe construction of the designed works.
Excavation Depth	The depth from the highest adjacent ground level to the bottom of the excavation.
Information Management System (IMS)	A digital, computer-based tool that collects, stores, analyses, and organizes data from various organizational sources to generate reports for improving system quality.
Method Statement	The generic name given to the document which describes the method of working. Known as the Work Package Plan in the Network Rail domain.
Responsible Manager (RM)	Person responsible for the safe planning and delivery for an activity which involves breaking ground.
PICex	Person in charge of Excavation - person on site and in charge of the task activity where the ground is broken.
PM	VolkerRail Project Manager
Service/Utility Owner	Organisation that directly owns the service or is responsible for its operation

**Table 1: Abbreviations and Definitions**

## 5 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

### 5.1 Roles and Responsibilities

#### 5.1.1 Appointments

During the mobilisation phase of a project, the CEM is responsible for identifying those individuals who will carry out the **Responsible Manager (RM)** role and recording these in the ENG01M011F01 competency register. The role will typically be given to the construction **CREs** whose portfolio includes excavation activities i.e. civils and track.

The **RM** is responsible for the competence and appointment of the **Buried Services Planner** who will coordinate and collate the outcomes of the surveys and produce permit documentation. The **RM** will record this role in the ENG01M011F01 competency register. The role will typically be given to the **Project Engineer** or **Construction Manager** whose portfolio includes excavation activities i.e. civils and track.

The **RM** is additionally responsible for the competence and appointment of the **Buried Services Surveyor** who will lead site-based activities for each of survey types and provide information to the **Buried Service Planner**. The **RM** will record this in the ENG01M011F01 competency register. The role will typically be given to the **Project Engineer** or **Construction Manager** whose portfolio includes excavation activities i.e. civils and track.

The **CRE** is responsible for the competence and appointment of the **PICex** and recording these in the

Issue no:	5	Date:	08/06/2026	Parent document:	IMS Element 9.26
Approved for IMS:	IMS Manager	Document owner:	Technical Director - Engineering	Page 2 of 10	

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ENG01M011F01 competency register, noting that it is likely that there may be many individuals carrying out this role in the delivery of larger projects.

**5.1.2 Competency**

The roles associated with the execution of this procedure are to have recorded competencies as aligned with the requirements below.

<b>Duty</b>	<b>Key Responsibilities</b>	<b>Competency Requirement</b>
Responsible Manager (RM)	Safe planning and delivery of the excavation works.  Appointment of Planner, Surveyor and PICex.  Review, authorise and issue of the permit	ATW at CRE or PE level or above in accordance with the requirements of ENG01-M01.  CAT Training Course (desirable)  Permit to Break Ground briefing from Professional Head  IOSH Managing Safely
Buried Services Planner	Production of permit documentation.  Creating a safe system of work for the excavation activities.  Coordinating the Buried Services Surveyor.  Engaging with the PICex to input into planning and surveying activities	Permit to Break Ground briefing – from Responsible Manager.  IOSH Managing Safely  CAT Scanning Training Course
Buried Services Surveyor	The individual appointed to carry out the buried service surveys.	Permit to Break Ground briefing – from Responsible Manager.  CAT Training Course (not for Desktop (Type D) or walkover (Type C) surveys.
Person in Charge of Excavation (PICex)	The individual appointed to execute the permit.	Permit to Break Ground briefing from Responsible Manager.  Demonstrable supervisory experience.  CAT Training Course

**Table 2: Role Responsibilities and Competencies**

Where sub-contractors are engaged on site, their competency records must be verified and recorded in advance and in accordance with the roles they are executing. Responsibility for this rests with the relevant discipline CRE, or the CEM where no VolkerRail CRE is appointed.

**5.2 Mobilisation**

**5.2.1 Information Management**

All records associated with the delivery of the requirements of this procedure shall be stored in the ASite common data environment (CDE). By exception they may be stored in an alliance or client hosted system with the transfer procedure into ASite being documented in the BIM Execution Plan QUA12F02.

Competency records shall be recorded on the project ENG01M011F01 register with CVs, briefing records and certification hosted in a manner which complies with GDPR regulations.

<b>Issue no:</b>	5	<b>Date:</b>	08/06/2026	<b>Parent document:</b>	IMS Element 9.26
<b>Approved for IMS:</b>	IMS Manager	<b>Document owner:</b>	Technical Director - Engineering		Page 3 of 10

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On receipt of the buried service records, they should be filed in the CDE. A hard copy should be available on site in all appropriate site offices.

It is good practice, particularly on fixed sites, to have a CAD drawing of the site which shows all known services relative to existing infrastructure. Marked up photographs also provide a good visual portrayal of services on site.

**5.2.2 Buried Service Request**

During mobilisation the **CEM** shall request the most recent version of the buried service records for storage on the CDE and distribute to all **RMs**. The requestor should submit a buried services request to the dedicated Network Rail Worksite Survey Team who will expect to respond within 20 days  
[worksitesurveyteam@networkrail.co.uk](mailto:worksitesurveyteam@networkrail.co.uk)

During mobilisation the **CEM** shall obtain the current version of the hazard directory for storage on the CDE and distribute to all **RMs**.

It should be assumed that uncharted buried services are present at all sites until proven otherwise. Buried service records which are approaching, or in excess of a year old, or those which are missing will be re-requested from either the client or from statutory undertakers.

**5.2.3 Engineering Management Plan**

During the mobilisation phase, the project will nominate, and record in the Engineering Management Plan, all **RMs** which will usually be the **CRE** and usually involve one individual per discipline.

A link to the live permit register CIV508F02 is to be provided.

**5.2.4 Subcontracting Arrangements**

Where the project proposes to use subcontractors to break ground, the arrangements for the delivery of roles shall be documented into the Engineering Management Plan.

At all times, the subcontracting organisation is responsible for the provision of the **PICex** and will use this CIV508 procedure rather than their own.

**5.2.5 Register of Permits (to Break Ground)**

The register of permits CIV508F02 shall be created by the **CEM** in accordance with the BIM Execution Plan and the link provided in the Engineering Management Plan.

**5.2.6 Buried Services Summary**

The buried service summary tab, held within the register of permits, is to be completed with HV cable and gas pipeline locations determined from the hazard directory. The **CEM** is to allocate this responsibility.

**5.3 Pre-Start Works – Planning**

**5.3.1 Identification of Operational Requirements**

Determining the operational requirements is the first stage of this process.

These can be broken down into the following key areas in addition to the location of any excavations.

- **Compound areas.** Where deliveries are made, the area must be understood in respect of its buried services such that the layout can be planned accordingly.
- **Areas to be excavated.** This will include all types of foundations including those which sit at ground level such as a mass concrete foundation, or those which penetrate the ground to depth such as piled foundations. The considerations will need to cover plant movements in the vicinity of buried services.
- **Areas where vehicles will form a roadway.** This may consist of a general use roadway where vehicles pass on a regular basis, or a one-off roadway to facilitate a specific piece of plant such as a crane. Both will cause ground movement and have the potential to affect existing buried services.
- **Areas where materials may be stockpiled.** These areas will compress and consolidate the ground over time, and impact on buried services. They should also be considered in respect of excavations which may take place in the vicinity.

<b>Issue no:</b>	5	<b>Date:</b>	08/06/2026	<b>Parent document:</b>	IMS Element 9.26
<b>Approved for IMS:</b>	IMS Manager	<b>Document owner:</b>	Technical Director - Engineering		Page 4 of 10

Please use [this form](#) to suggest content changes or continuous improvements to IMS procedures.

- **Areas of de-vegetation.** These areas often require a site strip which will disturb shallow buried cables if they are not identified beforehand.

In each instance the **CRE** is to populate the register CIV508F02 with all known work activities which require the breaking of ground. The minimum level of information which is to be provided at this stage is that associated with columns A-D.

5.3.2 Types of Survey

Buried service surveys are categorised by PAS128 into four distinct groups as follows. These are applicable in all cases of breaking ground which fall outside emergency incident response activities and works which are confined to the ballast box.

Survey Sequence	PAS128 Survey Type	Description
1 Desktop Survey	D	The review of the hazard directory and service records usually provided from client records and undertaken by the Buried Services Planner.  It is a prerequisite for all surveys and all breaking ground activities.
2 Site Reconnaissance Survey	C	The on-site visual survey undertaken by either the Buried Services Planner or Buried Services Surveyor, working in conjunction with the PICex.  This survey may be undertaken at the same time as the Type B survey
3 Detection Survey	B	The use of CAT scanning (or GPR) techniques over the survey area to detect the presence of buried services.
4 Verification Survey	A	The visual inspection of the service through excavation (Standard-of-care techniques) or via service inspection points such as inspection chambers, catchpits or manholes.

**Table 3: Survey Types**

5.3.3 Equipment

Various CAT Scanning devices are available in the marketplace. In most instances, RD8000, RD8100, RD8200 CAT & Genny or CAT4 CAT scanners will be used as this will provide continuity and a reduction in risks associated with unfamiliar equipment. It should be noted that certain clients allow only specific approved equipment on their infrastructure.

Wherever appropriate the CAT Scanner should be used in conjunction with a genny to optimise results.

5.3.4 Permit to Break Ground Register

The register of all permits will be maintained using the template CIV508-F02 and the information previously populated through the mobilisation phase. It shall accurately reflect the ongoing requirements for permits, which may change as the project develops, and their current status.

5.3.5 Permit to Break Ground

The planning and delivery of the permit survey requirements shall commence in a timely manner noting that the extent of survey requirements, as identified in section 5.3.2 will dictate the length of pre-execution time.

VolkerRail will use the CIV508F01 Permit to Break Ground which is based on the NR/L2/OHS/1030/F03 form.

The front page of the permit shall be completed by the **Buried Services Planner** with all known details. The description is to include the purpose and nature of the permanent or temporary works and shall confirm the intended depth requirements.

Issue no:	5	Date:	08/06/2026	Parent document:	IMS Element 9.26
Approved for IMS:	IMS Manager	Document owner:	Technical Director - Engineering	Page 5 of 10	

Please use [this form](#) to suggest content changes or continuous improvements to IMS procedures.

5.3.6 Survey Type D

The first survey to be undertaken is the desktop survey identified as survey type D in client documentation and PAS128. The buried services are to be reviewed in an office environment and the results recorded in section 2.1 of the permit. A site sketch is required at this stage and should be recorded in part 6 of the permit.

**5.4 Pre-Start Works – Site Survey (Non-Intrusive)**

5.4.1 Safe Systems of Work

Safe systems of work will be produced for all intended survey works, normally in either method statement or Work Package Plan format. The documentation will confirm the risks to health and safety associated with excavations within them and outline the appropriate protective measures.

Typical risks would include buried service strikes and working in and around excavations, inclusive of associated plant movements.

5.4.2 Survey Type C

The type C survey is the first visit to site that is associated with the permit. It should be undertaken with the proposed PICex wherever possible and is known as the site reconnaissance survey within PAS128. It may be undertaken as part of the design or correlation survey and should identify visible signs of services such as manholes, turning chambers, and electrical infrastructure. Section 2.2 of the permit shall be completed and additional infrastructure notes added to the site sketch (part 6 of the permit).

5.4.3 Identification and Protection of Services

Planning works will have identified the position of buried services at site access points, compounds and haulage roads as per the requirements of SAF23. These services should be protected or diverted away from the area. A permit (with associated surveys) is to be provided for these areas.

Service protection is to be assured using CIV510 The Management of Temporary Works.

All buried cable routes in the compound should be marked up using markers or spray paint that remains visible in all weathers, reapplied as necessary.

5.4.4 Permit to Break Ground

The permit is to be updated with the Survey type C information held within section 2.2 and any additional information appropriate to the site sketch. At this time the permit is being developed and does not require **RM** sign-off.

**5.5 Pre-Start Works – Service Detection and Verification**

5.5.1 Survey Type B

Survey scanning works are undertaken at this stage and will commence with an appropriate safe system of work. The survey will be undertaken in two phases.

- The first phase is to use the positional data provided in the buried service sketch in Part 6 of the permit to attempt on site identification of specific services using appropriate scanning tools. At this stage works to excavate and expose the service shall not be undertaken.
- The second phase is to scan the area to be excavated to determine if unrecorded services are present.

All identified services are to be marked up on site using spray paint. Appropriate points for Type A survey (excavation and verification) should be considered and marked up on site. It should be noted that if no services are shown on the buried service records, and no results are determined through site scanning techniques then Type A surveys are not required, and the permit can be issued back to the **RM** for sign-off and the execution of the permit.

5.5.2 Survey Type A

A Type A (trial hole/slit trench) survey is only required if services are determined to be present either through the outputs of the desktop (Type D) survey, or the outputs of the detection (Type B) survey. The positions should be in accordance with the outputs of the Type B survey.

The **RM** is to sign the permit authorising the commencement of trial holes using part 4, taking cognisance of the content of the permit to inform the table of conditions.

<b>Issue no:</b>	5	<b>Date:</b>	08/06/2026	<b>Parent document:</b>	IMS Element 9.26
<b>Approved for IMS:</b>	IMS Manager	<b>Document owner:</b>	Technical Director - Engineering		Page 6 of 10

Please use [this form](#) to suggest content changes or continuous improvements to IMS procedures.

Slit trenching is undertaken in conjunction with a CIV510 Temporary Works assessment and appropriate safe system of work. Positions are taken from the Survey Type B outputs and excavations shall be undertaken using safe digging techniques as described in NR/L2/OHS/1030 Clause 10.3.

Verification of electrical (and telecommunications) cables should utilise both CAT and genny to trace the cables and minimise the need for extensive excavation works.

**5.5.3 Permit to Break Ground**

At the completion of survey types D, C & B, or types D, C, B & A if services found and verified, the planning and investigative aspects of the permit are complete, and the permit can be fully authorised by the **RM**. Checking of all stages of the permit is to be undertaken, including the sketch detail within part 6.

**5.5.4 Design Impact**

Following conclusion of the planning and investigation stages of the permit, the **CRE** responsible for the construction is to assess the impact of all services on the proposed design. Assistance from the **CRE** responsible for design is to be sought as appropriate. This is a specific requirement in instances where services may impact on the design outcome i.e. services in the vicinity of a piled foundation.

**5.5.5 Permit Version Control**

The permit is a live document as planning and survey stages are completed. Revisions are to be provided at each sign off by the **RM** and at the conclusion of the permit noting that the permit may be renewed when programme changes cause the permit to expire. The **RM** is responsible for returned documents being retained in accordance with the NR/L3/INF/02226 requirements.

**5.6 Execution of the Permit**

**5.6.1 PICex Acceptance of Permit**

The named individual identified at the end of part 4 of the permit will accept the permit in section 5 by completing the 10-point checklist and signing the acceptance. The **PICex** will brief the permit to those undertaking the works to advise the position and depth of all services.

The delivery team will execute the permit using safe digging practices incorporated into the safe system of work. These may include vacuum extraction for the higher risk sites and repeated use of the CAT scanning device at 300mm depth intervals.

**5.6.2 Excavation Related Dangers**

Excavations present numerous risks and should be undertaken only when risk assessment has been undertaken and the associated risk assessment used to inform the safe system of work. Excavation collapse is a particularly prominent risk for deeper excavation works and utilises the CIV510 Management of Temporary Works procedure to control the risk. A temporary works assessment, in accordance with CIV510 shall be undertaken for all excavations and the assessment used to inform the risk assessment.

**5.6.3 Discovery of Uncharted Services**

If, during an excavation, an uncharted service is found. It is to be protected to facilitate the remaining works. Its position is to be recorded accurately with GPS coordinates and the information recorded on the permit to dig. The information should subsequently be recorded in spreadsheet form by the site management team.

The spreadsheet should be forwarded to the client on a regular basis and be included in the handback file. Additionally, where buried services are recorded on an overall site plan in CAD format, the document should be updated and the results distributed accordingly.

**5.6.4 Emergency Works**

Should it be necessary to carry out emergency or short notice excavation works, it may not be possible to obtain search information from service owners in advance. In instances such as these the **HSQES Director** is to authorise the proposed breaking of ground.

Surveys of the ground using locating equipment should be carried out more frequently than usual during the works and particular care taken when excavating, assuming at all times that buried services are present.

All other requirements including the provision of a safe system of work and permit to break ground must be followed.

<b>Issue no:</b>	5	<b>Date:</b>	08/06/2026	<b>Parent document:</b>	IMS Element 9.26
<b>Approved for IMS:</b>	IMS Manager	<b>Document owner:</b>	Technical Director - Engineering		Page 7 of 10

Please use [this form](#) to suggest content changes or continuous improvements to IMS procedures.

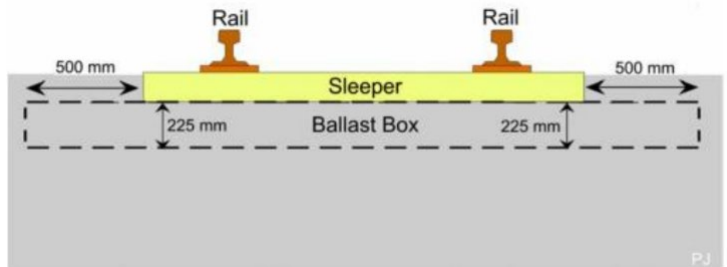
**5.6.5 Use of Spikes**

It is preferable that alternative arrangements are made when spiking is proposed. Where it is not possible to avoid the use of spikes, a permit to spike must be endorsed by Network Rail. The permit must be based on service searches and a CAT scan with genny. Where work is for other clients, the **CRE** will authorise a proposal to spike if appropriate.

It should be noted that certain clients, including Network Rail, require approval of proposals to spike prior to the works commencing. Where working on the Network Rail infrastructure the NR/L2/OHS/1030/F04 Permit to Spike shall be used.

**5.6.6 Works in the Ballast Box**

Works in the Ballast Box do not formally require a Permit to Break Ground in accordance with the requirements of NR/L2/OHS/1030. The ballast box term refers to the zone 500mm directly out from the sleeper ends to a depth of 225mm below the bottom of the sleepers.



The area between sleepers can, on occasion contain cables and this area is to be visually inspected prior to any work in the ballast box. If the presence of buried services is considered likely, known to exist, or discovered in the Ballast Box for the work area concerned, the full requirements of this procedure apply. Clause 13 requires that this procedure be applied in full when this area is disturbed through excavation, sleeper renewal and or TBI.

**5.6.7 Service Strike Reporting**

All service strikes are to be reported as an incident with the primary event type being a 'Service Strike'. The permit to break ground is to be appended to the incident record at the earliest opportunity and the CAT scanner quarantined.

**5.6.8 Devegetation Works**

The removal of vegetation and the use of this permit is subject to risk assessment. Where a risk assessment determines that a permit is required, the CIV508F01 is to be utilised.

In most instances the permit will utilise survey types C&D to undertake robust documentation and site walkover surveys in advance of the works.

The VolkerRail IMS does not have a separate Permit to Remove Vegetation.

**5.7 Retention of Records**

The **PIHex** is responsible for returning all used permits to the **RM** who will ensure they are stored on the agreed common data environment. There are no VolkerRail record retentions associated with this procedure beyond contractual completion.

Permit to Break Ground records should be maintained for the duration of the project unless there is a contractual requirement to keep records for longer.

Certain clients may wish to see records included in the H&S file.

There is a requirement for buried service feedback to be given in line with the requirements of NR/L2/AMG/1040. This is to be managed by the **CEM**.

**6 MONITORING**

A targeted assurance checklist (CIV508F03) is a new feature introduced with Issue 5 of this procedure and allows monitoring to be undertaken as L1 & L2 activities whilst applying a consistent remit.

**7 DOCUMENTATION (OUTPUTS)**

- CIV508F01 - Permit to Break Ground

Issue no:	5	Date:	08/06/2026	Parent document:	IMS Element 9.26
Approved for IMS:	IMS Manager	Document owner:	Technical Director - Engineering		Page 8 of 10

Please use [this form](#) to suggest content changes or continuous improvements to IMS procedures.

- CIV508F02 - Permit to Break Ground Register
- CIV508F03 - Targeted Assurance Checklist - Permit to Break Ground

## 8 ISSUE RECORD

Issue	Date	Comments
1	16/01/2014	New standard. Incorporates previous issues of P&E/322, CE/507 and P&E/310 which have been withdrawn upon this issue.
2	16/09/2016	New Permit to Dig applied and Permit to dig and Permit to Spike flowcharts added.
3	23/10/2019	Scope amended to include subcontracting organisations. CIV508F02 Permit to Dig register has been added.
4	02/07/2024	5-year review undertaken with no change to requirements but with the addition of guidance in Appendix 4 covering Level Crossings.
5	08/06/2026	Significant rewrite to reflect the updated client requirements within NR/L2/OHS/1030. New form CIV508F03

## 9 WHAT HAS CHANGED IN THIS LATEST ISSUE AND WHY

This procedure has been comprehensively updated to align with the requirements of NR/L2/OHS/1030 issue 2 which embraces the requirements of PAS 128:2022 (BSI).

A new targeted Assurance checklist has been introduced (CIV508F03).

## 10 BRIEFING REQUIREMENTS

All new employees will receive an introduction to the Integrated Management System (IMS) at induction, according to the nature of the role.

All employees with an email address receive the 'Record of Revisions' each month, which details changes to the IMS. All Line Managers retain the responsibility to ensure their staff are briefed on changes as appropriate.

The following table defines how revised issues of this document are briefed to existing employees according to related specific responsibilities.

This is determined using the 'RACI' principle. Those roles identified as 'Responsible' and 'Accountable' should receive a formal awareness briefing facilitated by the Document Owner.

Discipline	Role	RACI	Type of briefing
Project Management	Project Engineer / Assistant / Senior	Responsible	Detailed
Project Management	Construction Manager / Assistant / Senior	Responsible	Detailed
Project Management	Supervisor / Senior	Responsible	Detailed
Project Management	Project Manager / Assistant / Senior	Informed	Awareness
HSQES	Head of Quality & Assurance	Informed	Awareness

Competence	RACI	Type of briefing
CEM	Responsible	Detailed
CRE	Responsible	Detailed

Issue no:	5	Date:	08/06/2026	Parent document:	IMS Element 9.26
Approved for IMS:	IMS Manager	Document owner:	Technical Director - Engineering	Page 9 of 10	

Please use [this form](#) to suggest content changes or continuous improvements to IMS procedures.

<b>Competence</b>	<b>RACI</b>	<b>Type of briefing</b>
Responsible Manager (RM) (appointment)	Responsible	Detailed
Person in Charge of Excavation (PiCex) (appointment)	Responsible	Detailed
Buried Services Planner / Surveyor	Responsible	Detailed

**11 IMS AUTHORISATION****Document owner approval:**

**Ben Mather**, Technical Director – Engineering, 08/06/2026

**Approval for IMS:**

**Paula Roberts**, IMS Manager, 08/06/2026

<b>Issue no:</b>	5	<b>Date:</b>	08/06/2026	<b>Parent document:</b>	IMS Element 9.26
<b>Approved for IMS:</b>	IMS Manager	<b>Document owner:</b>	Technical Director - Engineering	<b>Page 10 of 10</b>	

Please use [this form](#) to suggest content changes or continuous improvements to IMS procedures.