

4 September 2017

## **New educational tool to combat striking utility services**

People are being encouraged to do the right thing and dial before they dig and maintain safe clearance distances when working near overhead powerlines to save lives and avoid costly utility strikes.

SafeWork SA in collaboration with industry stakeholders has developed six toolbox videos highlighting practical steps that can be taken to avoid striking underground utilities and contact with overhead power lines.

SafeWork SA Executive Director Martyn Campbell said the initiative was aimed at educating people of the importance of taking all necessary precautions when working near utilities such as power, gas, communications, and water.

“It doesn’t matter if you’re a home renovator, a contractor or a major construction firm - if you’re planning any form of work near utilities, this toolbox series is for you,” he said.

“The consequences of poor planning can be devastating.

“Workers lives could be put at risk, and essential services could be shut off to entire communities.

“In addition to the human cost, the financial impact can be significant for businesses and the community.

“Even for something as simple as installing a signpost or a fence, the importance of locating underground utilities before you dig cannot be overstated.”

Mr Campbell said the video toolbox series from SafeWork SA covered six key areas:

- Getting essential services information and the importance and limitations of ‘Dial Before You Dig’
- Steps people can take to find underground utilities, prior to excavating
- How to minimise risks when undertaking excavation work
- Working safely near overhead powerlines
- Building structures safely near overhead powerlines, including scaffolds
- What to do if you strike a gas or powerline.

“SafeWork SA encourages people who work near underground or overhead utilities to watch these short videos and share them with staff and other contacts,” Mr Campbell said.

Preventing accidental contact with utilities is a key priority for the civil engineering and construction industry, with the series developed as part of SafeWork SA's [Construction Safety Action Plan 2017-19](#) which was released in August this year.

The videos can be found at [https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/show\\_page.jsp?id=116525](https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/show_page.jsp?id=116525).

People can register for a free seminar held on October 4 as part of National Safe Work Month on avoiding utility strikes at <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/avoiding-utility-strikes-tickets-37086883868>, or request help from a SafeWork SA work health and safety advisor by calling 1300 365 255.