

Lock Out/Tag Out Failure – Wastewater in Excavation

In November 2022 wastewater began discharging into an open excavation after a lockout was removed from a nearby wastewater pump.

No crew or plant were in the excavation at the time, but there were nearby workers that were able to notify the WWL COG utilities team by phone call and subsequently shut the pump down. The wastewater was caught within the excavation.

What went wrong?

- The isolation was carried out by the contractor under instruction from Wellington Water.
- The pump was isolated with a *zip tie* – **No Lock** and **No Tag** was used.
 - This was in case the pump needed to be operated by Wellington Water during an emergency .
- The shutdown plan did not reference the Wellington Water Lock Out/ Tag Out Procedure.
- Key stakeholders (e.g., COG Utilities Team) were only involved with the shut down after the plan was approved and there was poor clarity around trial shutdowns vs. actual shutdowns.

Solution:

1. Always refer to the Wellington Water Lock Out/ Tag Out Procedure when isolating Wellington Water assets
2. Ensure everyone impacted by the lockout is aware of the isolation plan
3. Always Tag Out isolated equipment, Lock Out where possible

