

Health and Safety Executive		Sector Information Minute	
Commercial and Consumer Services, Transportation and Utilities Sector (CACTUS)		SIM 05/2000/50 (formerly SIM 03/2000/20)	
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Target Audience:
Specialist Group Inspectors
AFQ Inspectors

THE SAFE WORKING AND USE OF WATER JETTING IN DRAINS & SEWERS

This SIM introduces a new Code of Practice produced by the Water Jetting Association entitled *Code of Practice for the safe working and use of water jetting in drains and sewers*.

1 Historically the Water Jetting Association has produced codes of practice and training for the use of high pressure and ultra high pressure water jetting equipment. Whilst its training manual contains information for high pressure water cleaning (5,000-10,000 psi) until now there has been no specific code of practice for this part of the industry.

2 Drain cleaning is carried out in both domestic and work premises. It can be arranged by private house holders, water companies/local authorities (LAs) with responsibilities for public sewers, facilities managers covering buildings through to large industrial sites. Clients will vary in their knowledge of appropriate safety precautions. A householder is unlikely to challenge working practices. An office manager should ensure the contractor is following good practice but is unlikely to have the knowledge to assess the risks involved, whilst a major company with dedicated h&s staff should be taking an active and informed interest in the work of contractors. The Code of Practice provides an industry standard by which to assess such contractors.

3 Most drain cleaning will be a peripatetic activity and come within HSE enforcement. There will be considerable variation on the allocation of depots and head office premises. Some companies have depots with repair facilities which will fall to HSE enforcement. Other companies work through a franchise system and may only have an office inspected by the LA. Inspectors are reminded that they can visit premises registered with the LA as part of any investigation into peripatetic work activities. In the case of a visit to a franchise/head office the code can be used to discuss the quality of training provision.

4 The Code represents good practice within the industry and is based on current working practices. HSE has seen the code and its comments have been accepted by the Water Jetting Association. These have been mainly concerned with the interpretation of h&s legislation. The National Utilities Group, Nottingham would therefore appreciate any information should inspectors experience difficulties in applying the procedures detailed in the Code.

5 Copies of the Code have been issued to file 847. A few additional copies will also be held by the National Utilities Group, Nottingham (VPN 513 2800). Copies can also be purchased

from the Water Jetting Association, 17 St Judith's Lane, Sawtry, Cambs PE17 5XE (01487 834034).

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