Prevention is better than cure…

Excavation work is done for various reasons and by various agencies and persons. It happens regularly that an Aqualectra cable or a pipe is damaged during excavation work. This causes an interruption in the supply of water or electricity to a possibly large number of consumers and leads not only to inconvenience and irritation with the consumers, but also to unnecessary costs of repair on the cable or pipe. It is, therefore, very important that, before starting with the excavation work, you do all that is possible to prevent possible damage to cables or pipes. In this folder we give a description of the guidelines drawn up by Aqualectra Distribution for digging in the vicinity of cables and pipes. We also describe the services that we can offer you when preparing your excavation work.

Before digging…

If you want to do excavation work on government or private land, you will first of all have to obtain the required permits. Subsequently, before digging, you will have to report to the utility companies and government services concerned (Aqualectra Distribution, SETEL, ANTELE-COM and D.O.W.) in order to obtain information on possibly existing cables and pipes on the land where you want to dig.

With regard to Aqualectra Distribution, we recommend you to get informed of our official guidelines for digging in the vicinity of cables and pipes which are described in this folder. In these guidelines, there is an extensive description of what Aqualectra Distribution expects of you prior to and during the excavation work. You are responsible for a correct treatment of our cables and pipes, and we count on preventing possible damage to our cables and/or pipes due to good consultation and the necessary cooperation.

What can we offer you…

Aqualectra Distribution possesses detailed drawings of all our distribution cables and pipes. You can ask for the drawings that are necessary for you at a charge. In addition, we can also mark off the course of cables and/or pipes for you. If the cables and/or pipes laid are not found on the spot concerned, we can have our cable experts trace the cables and/or pipes concerned. We can charge you an hourly rate for these activities.
Where can you get information?

For information on your excavation work and to request drawings or other services of Aqualectra Distribution, you can apply to our Department for Registration of Distribution Means, telephone number: 463-2309. This department is in our main office at Pater Euwensweg no. 1. Mind you: the entrance to our main office is not the same entrance as the entrance to our service office, but is next to it.

Application procedure ...

You can submit applications for drawings or other services of Aqualectra Distribution personally to the Department for Registration of Distribution Means. This can be done only personally, as you often have to bring along a plan or a projection in order to apply for drawings or services. A staff member of this department will complete a form together with you and then inform you when you can come back to fetch and pay for the drawings applied for. After paying for these drawings at one of the cash points of Aqualectra Distribution at Pater Euwensweg in Otrobanda, you can fetch your drawings at the Department for Registration of Distribution Means. After paying for the services required of Aqualectra Distribution, you can make an appointment with a staff member of the Department for Distribution Means.

Official guidelines of Aqualectra Distribution for digging in the vicinity of cables and pipes

1. Under all circumstances, the contractor will have to positively detect the cables and pipes in whose vicinity excavation work will be done before starting his own activities. If, after following the instructions described below, the cables and/or pipes cannot be detected, the contractor will have to notify Aqualectra Distribution, after which, in joint consultation, the work will be determined.

2. In order to establish the correct location of the cables and/or pipes accurately, sufficient test trenches will have to be dug, perpendicularly to the cable and/or pipe course. These trenches must be dug by hand. It is not permitted to use a trench digger to do this work!

3. After the exact locations of all the cables and/or pipes in the area concerned have been established by digging the test trenches, the use of a trench digger for further excavation work can be permitted, on the understanding that digging within one (1) meter of cables and pipes must be done by hand, and the use of trench diggers within this distance is prohibited under all circumstances.

4. By ‘digging by han’ is meant digging with a shovel. For loosening hard layers outside the direct vicinity (approx. 10 cm) of cables and pipes, the use of a pickaxe is permitted. Within the direct vicinity of cables and HDPE pipes (approx. 10 cm) and also in places where the cable protection tiles or mats have been removed, a pickaxe may not be used.

5. Cable and HDPE pipes that have been exposed due to excavation work, must be treated with utmost care. If dug in over a distance of more than one (1) meter, the cables and HDPE pipes have to be supported. In certain cases, for the protection of the cables, a formwork will have to be placed around the cables. Supporting cables and HDPE pipes must be done by placing a beam or pipe over the excavation, to which the cables and HDPE pipes
are tied up with interspaces of maximally one (1) meter. All this in consultation with our supervisory personnel.

6. Mechanical tensions in cables and pipes must be avoided. It is, therefore, absolutely prohibited to have objects resting on cables and pipes, to walk on cables and pipes or to mechanically burden cables and pipes in any other manner.

7. During the refilling of the excavation, the soil under the cables and HDPE pipes must be sufficiently set and leveled again. If this is done and the soil has been sufficiently leveled up, the supports, as referred to in item 5, can be removed. The cables and pipes must be placed back neatly and without unnecessary crossings.

8. The area around the cables and pipes must be filled up with clean, white sand without rubble or other sharp objects. If the cables were originally separated and/or covered with cable protection tiles, or mats as the case may be, they must be placed back. Cable tiles lying at the edge of excavations and that sagged due to the digging, must be dug out and placed anew. Broken tiles must be replaced by new ones. After this, the excavation can be filled up again with the original soil.

9. If, in the case of crossings of cables and pipes, the distance between the cables and pipes is less than 10 cm, a layer of cable protection tiles or mats must be placed between the cables and the pipes.