

Vented Footway Board

Cadent Lane Rental Industry Publication



Introduction

Essential gas repairs form an important part of everyday life in London which can be disruptive to pedestrians when undertaken on the footway. When carrying out these repairs on the gas network there is usually a requirement to vent nearby inspection chambers to remove any gas that may be present before the work can be undertaken as well as during remediation. Traditionally, this is done by removing the inspection cover and replacing it with a metal grate, which is often heavy and difficult to manoeuvre, or by placing barriers around the opening left after the cover is removed, which takes up valuable space. To try and alleviate the use of barrier systems on the busiest footways in London and remove the requirement of heavy lifting for operatives, Cadent Gas in collaboration with Oxford Plastics, have been looking at alternative options when carrying out this type of activity. Any alternative developed would need to improve or at least maintain current standards as well as meet the requirements of both the gas industry and highway authority.

The Project

The idea for the project was developed by the Street Works and Reinstatement for London Operations at Cadent Gas, after recognising that footway boards are widely used across sector for placement over works on footways to maintain pedestrian access. However, a vented footway board did not exist within the sector for gas repairs. The proposal was for Cadent Gas and Oxford Plastics to develop a concept for use when venting inspection chambers during essential gas repair works. Once design features had been identified, a prototype was subsequently produced and trialled on site to ensure the board would function in the intended manner, remove the requirement for a barrier system around an inspection chamber and meet the required standards. Key features of the board include:

- Standard and widely used footway board dimensions / features (i.e. lightweight)
- Ventilation grid permanently fixed with rivets
- Pegs on underside to secure board within chamber
- Vinyl adhesive label for writing Permit Reference on
- Highly visible 'No Smoking' signs on all four corners
- Vinyl adhesive label for company logo /emergency number

Industry stakeholders were invited to review the concept and constructive feedback was received from Transport for London, Essex County Council and internal Cadent stakeholders, which were then considered and incorporated into the final prototype design where applicable. Stakeholders were then invited to observe the onsite trials which took place in February 2022, receiving positive feedback from all those in attendance.

Four No Smoking Signs

Emergency Number Sign
Vinyl self adhesive label
bonded to trenchcover.
200 x 40mm
Protected by 4mm thk
Polycarbonate window,
bolted to board with 2 x
philips bolts and
wingnuts.

Holes to bolt window

Drawn by: EG
Checked by: JE

Issue	Date	Note
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Outcomes

The developed prototype and trials have shown that a vented footway board, is a viable alternative to having a barrier system when venting inspection chambers, which has the potential to free up valuable space, particularly in locations with high pedestrian densities. The board also has the capability to maintain access, particularly to more vulnerable road users.

The ability to write a permit reference on the board provides easy identification for both the gas industry and inspecting highway authority to associated works, which may not have been easily done historically, enabling time savings for all parties.

The 'No Smoking' sign maintains current requirements /practices and the ability to include the relevant company name and emergency number allows members of the public to report any issues identified and the company highway authority to locate apparatus.

Including pegs on the underside, allows the board to be secured within the frame of the inspection chamber, mitigating movement once in situ and subsequently maintaining safety for anyone walking over the board.

The use of a vented footway board over a standard barrier system may also minimise the potential of vandalism: remove the probability of signing, lighting and guarding being knocked over, thereby reducing the possibility of an inadequacy being recorded against an inspection of the site.

Conclusion

The project has been a huge success, highlighting the need for this type of product and identifying a gap in the current market. The vented footway board has enormous potential when considering alternatives for venting gas, freeing up valuable space on footways with heavy pedestrian densities and maintaining access, particularly for more vulnerable road users, during essential gas repair works. It is hoped that vented footway board options will start to be developed across traffic management manufacturers / suppliers and used more widely across the industry as a result of this project.



TfL Lane Rental Scheme

Optimising customer journeys through the delivery of safer, innovative and sustainable roadworks



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