

Simple Guidelines on Common Trench Cooperation

Background

1. In May 2008, with the support of Joint Utilities Policy Group, Highways Department (HyD) in collaboration with utility undertakings (UUs) commenced a 2-year Site Coordination Committee (SCC) trial. One of the major objectives of this SCC trial is to promote common trench cooperation among road opening parties in order to minimize repeated road openings, excavation time and disturbance to the public. During the trial period, several common trench agreements were reached and successfully accomplished (*see Annex 1*).
2. In view of the successful common trench agreements reached in the SCC trial, in the 77th Utilities Technical Liaison Committee (UTLC) Meeting, the Chairman of the UTLC earnestly appealed to UUs not to be too concerned with cost apportionment in order to foster more common trench cooperation whenever suitable site situations arose. After discussion, the meeting agreed that the technical experience gained from the successful common trench cases should be documented for future reference.
3. Against such background, this “Simple Guidelines” is prepared for UUs’ reference.

Guidelines on Common Trench Cooperation

4. With reference to the experience gained from the common trench cases agreed in the SCC trial, some simple guidelines on common trench cooperation after the issuance of respective excavation permits (XPs) to individual permit holders are summarized as follows:
 - (i) For any two or more XPs having encountered the following scenario, respective XP holders may consider common trench excavation:
 - with an intersecting portion overlapping larger than 10m² or with parallel alignments along the same footpath/carriageway; and
 - with the XP commenced early having excavation deeper than the succeeding XPs or the last XP belongs to Highways Department.
 - (ii) Each individual XP holder should submit his own temporary traffic arrangement (TTA) proposal to Police for approval even the TTA proposals are similar. Before handing over the common trench site, Police should be notified of the date of handover. Under normal

circumstances, seeking further TTA approval specifically for common trench works is not required as individual TTA proposals should have already been approved. In order to ensure the continuity of the lighting, signing and guarding (LSG) at the common trench area, it is recommended that the contractor who hands over the site allows the contractor who takes over the site to erect the new LSG first and removes his own LSG afterwards.

- (iii) The level of backfilling and the handover of excavated materials should be agreed before handing over the site in order to avoid dispute. Unless exempted in the “Approved Work List for Exemption from Submission of the Test Certificate/Report”, each XP holder should submit the original copy or certified true copy of the test certificate/report on each layer of backfill and/or reinstatement carried out by him in accordance with the requirements of “Backfilling and Reinstatement” stipulated in the Conditions of Permit.
- (iv) The last XP holder will be responsible for the defect liability of the reinstatement of the common trench portion, e.g. the reinstatement surface and street furniture. For other kinds of defect, HyD will base on evidence to justify which XP holder should be liable. If there is sufficient evidence, HyD will request the liable XP holder other than the last one to rectify the defect.
- (v) XP holders who have involved in the common trench excavation but are not responsible for the final reinstatement should report completion as follows in order to allow HyD to trace who is responsible for the final reinstatement of the common trench portion:
 - (1) Choose “Permanent” as the reinstatement type; and
 - (2) Submit a sketch/sketches indicating the common trench portion to be reinstated by the last XP holder together with the respective permit number for HyD Regional Office’s reference.Completion notice can be submitted after handing over the common trench portion if all other parts of the XP have been reinstated.
- (vi) If SCC or Site Liaison Group has not been set up, UUs may contact HyD’s XP Processing Team for assistance in reaching a common trench arrangement..

Cost Implications

5. The above simple guidelines do not involve any cost sharing issues as it is a complicated matter and needs the involvement of the management of the involved parties. Nevertheless, according to the experience of the successful common trench cases (*shown in Annex 1*), all involved parties did not encounter any additional cost implications but have achieved minor cost and time savings due to common trench cooperation.

Implementation

6. Common trench approach should be regarded as one of the important measures to minimize disruption to the public due to road works. UUs should exercise due diligence on adopting common trench approach if circumstances render it feasible. On the other hand, HyD would monitor the situation through ROCCs and would carry out a review at the appropriate time to see whether any other measures need to be implemented to encourage the common trench approach.

Research and Development Division
Highways Department
December 2010

Case No.	Location	Common trench involved parties		Type of works	Level of backfilling	Excavated materials	Handover arrangement	TTA arrangement	Police approval	Cost implication	SCC Chairman's comments
1	Wong Nai Chung Road, Happy Valley	1st party	HEC	LV cable reinforcement work	Up to formation level	Except the paving block, HEC removed all excavated materials from site.	HEC and HyD agreed a date to handover the site.	HEC removed the barriers from site on the date of handover.	Prior approval was not necessary as each party had its own approved TTA/LSG proposal.	No cost implication.	This common trench cooperation reduced disturbance to general public.
		2nd party	HyD	Footpath resurfacing	Complete the footpath reinstatement			After HEC removed the barriers, HyD immediately fenced off the site according to its own approved LSG proposal.			
2	Pak Shing Street, Tai Po	1st party	CLP	Lay cable	Up to 600mm below footpath	CLP left excavated material to HyD for backfilling.	CLP and HyD agreed a date to handover the site.	CLP removed the barriers from site on the date of handover.	Prior approval was not necessary as each party had its own approved LSG proposals. However, they had notify Police the date of handover.	No cost implication.	Common trench attributed saving in cost of 50% to the involved parties in this case
		2nd party	HyD	Lay cable	Complete the footpath reinstatement			After CLP removed the barriers, HyD immediately fenced off the site according to its own approved LSG proposal.			
3	Hung To Road, Kwun Tong	1st party	DSD	Pipe laying and manhole construction along Hung To Road slow lane	Up to formation level of carriageway	As DSD had backfilled to formation level of the carriageway before handover, no excavated material would be left in place for backfilling.	DSD and CLP agreed a date to handover the site.	DSD removed the barriers from site on the date of handover.	DSD and CLP had their own approved TTA plans. Police's agreement had been sought in a TMLG meeting.	No cost implication.	This common trench cooperation reduced disturbance to general public.
		2nd party	CLP	Cable laying across Hung To Road	Need to re-excavate for laying cables and then backfill and reinstate the carriageway			After DSD removed the barriers, CLP immediately fenced off the site according to its own approved TTA proposal.			