

A VILLAGE MILLING NIGHTMARE

By Nathan Wissenbach

I was driving through a village after completing a leak detection survey nearby and decided to stop in to see if I could be any assistance. During my visit, I noticed that the main road had just been repaved. I asked how did the milling and repaving go. He shook his head and said it was a nightmare. When they milled the road, they hit every valve box that he had marked out and destroyed the cap and the riser. That was bad enough, but when they swept the street to get the millings off, they packed the valve boxes full of millings to the point the valves were no longer usable. He stated that he would not be able to isolate a water main break due to the unusable valves.

The operation specialist contacted DOT due to the fact it was a state road and requested that they set up a meeting with the paving company to see what they were going to do to fix the problem they caused. During the meeting, the foreman denied that his people caused the damage that filled the valve boxes with millings and refused to fix the issue. The foreman stated that was the condition the valve boxes were in when he started milling. He asked if there were any photos showing proof that he caused the damage. The operation specialist did not have photos of the valve boxes beforehand. They refused to pay for the repairs. The operation specialist had to make the repairs.

My recommendation is to photograph or video your valve boxes and curb stops documenting conditions before construction begins. If damage occurs, you will be able to hold the correct party responsible. The same is true for any excavation. You should document the condition of the road, driveway, or lawn before an excavation begins, to ensure restoration is completed in a manner that reflects the previous condition.

Always be sure to protect yourself as the operation specialist, and your system from undue criticism or litigation. A little time upfront could save a great deal of time and money in the long run.



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