



August 3 — Trust...But Verify

Prior to our concrete subcontractor beginning work cutting a concrete slab and excavating a trench, we were assured that there should be nothing under the concrete as far as conduit or piping.

We requested a scan be performed to determine if there was anything under the concrete in the area we would be working. The scan revealed several conduits and pipes.

Just because someone says it's clear...

...doesn't mean it's safe to cut.

Before a concrete subcontractor began cutting a slab and excavating a trench, the crew was told there were no underground conduits or piping beneath the work area. It would have been easy to accept that information and begin work without asking another question.

Instead, the crew took the time to verify the work area before cutting into the concrete. That extra step helped prevent the possibility of striking hidden utilities that could have resulted in damaged equipment, service interruptions, costly repairs, or serious injury.

Assumptions are one of the most common contributors to workplace incidents. Information can be outdated, incomplete, or simply incorrect. Whether you're locating utilities, identifying energy sources, or reviewing a job plan, verification is what turns assumptions into facts. Taking a few extra minutes to confirm conditions before work begins is often what prevents an incident from ever occurring.

Hazards

- Hidden electrical conduit
- Buried process or utility piping
- Striking energized or pressurized systems
- Property damage and costly repairs
- Unexpected service interruptions
- Relying on assumptions instead of verification

Words of Wisdom

Trust the information you're given—but always verify it before acting. A few minutes spent confirming conditions can prevent injuries, equipment damage, and unplanned downtime.

Pause and Think

- Have you ever been told something was "clear" only to discover it wasn't?
- What tools or resources can you use to verify conditions before cutting, drilling, or excavating?
- Why can assumptions become more dangerous on familiar jobs?
- How can crews challenge information respectfully without slowing down the job unnecessarily?
- What other tasks on your jobsite require verification before work begins?

Closing Thought

Every safe job begins with one simple habit: **verify first, then proceed**. Assumptions don't prevent incidents—verification does.