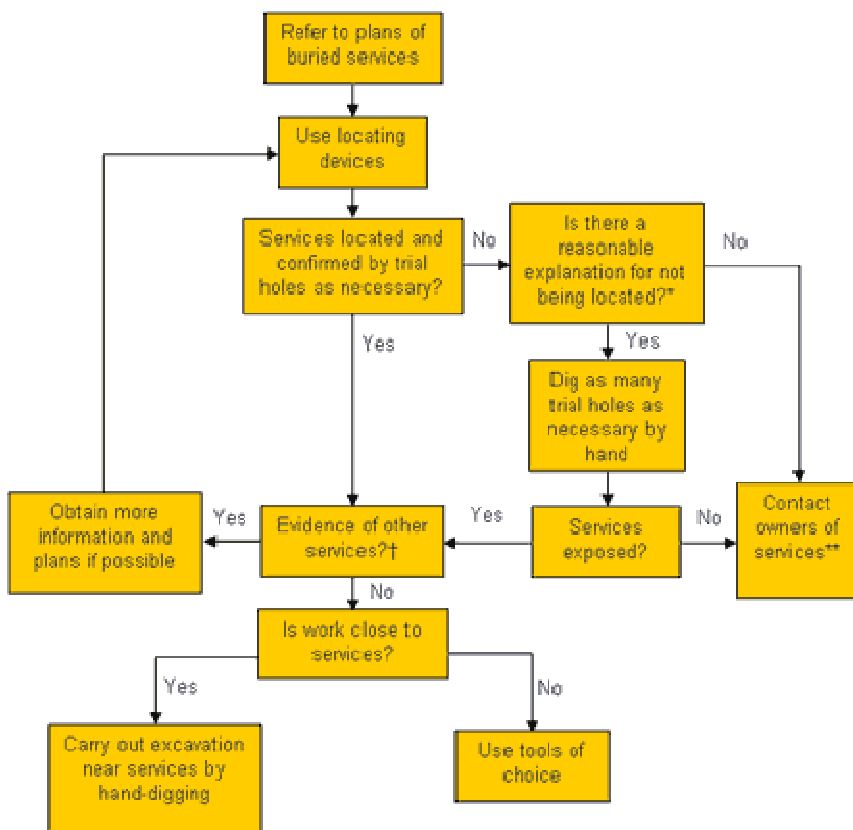


Underground cables

If you are digging or disturbing the earth you should take care to avoid damaging underground services. Underground electricity cables can be particularly hazardous because they often look like pipes and it is impossible to tell if they are live just by looking at them.

Sometimes there are signs warning of underground services. Where you see these you should ask a competent person to find these for you and make sure you dig in a safe way.

Refer to the flow chart below for guidance on how to work near underground services. The priced HSE booklet [Avoiding danger from underground services](#)^[8] gives guidance on how you can reduce the risks of digging near underground services.




* For example, could services be non-metallic pipes? Refer to text for further information.

† In particular, visual evidence. Ensure that the presence of services, which may be unmarked on plans or for which no plans are available, has been considered, for example service connections.

** If there is visual evidence of services, but owners cannot be traced, despite all reasonable attempts to do so, any excavation could proceed but using hand-dug trial holes and proceeding with great care.

Cable colours

Many electrical cables are coloured to show their purpose and the voltage they are carrying. However, there are many standards used around the world, and you should never assume that a cable of a particular colour is at a particular voltage. [A free information leaflet gives details of recent changes to the colour code](#)^[9] . It is very important that you identify what voltages are present on an installation you are not familiar with.

**The above reference material was taken from the HSE website
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/electricity/nearelectric.htm#underground>**