



## Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members



### Hydro-Vacuumping Around Energized Cable Safety Message

What would you suggest as appropriate PPE for hydro-vacuumping around energized cable?

PPE requirements are always based on an assessment of the hazards involved with the work. The whole idea of hydro-vac is to avoid damaging underground facilities. Good practices typically require a good cable location and depth determination, followed by routing the vac operation from outside toward an undermining cable to prevent any contact with the cable. Still, there are obvious risks involved that require protection of the operator.

If a worker has their hands on a vacuum chute in the ground, they might have an exposure if the vacuum contacts energized cables. In that case, voltage-rated rubber gloves would certainly be required. Footwear protection would also be a consideration since a circuit would be made from vacuum chute to worker to ground.

It is also reasonable to assume an arc flash could occur below the worker, resulting in a heat rise out of the vacuum hole, so an arc-rated shirt and arc-rated pants might be required.

grounding the vac truck might be in order. If the vacuum blows up a cable, grounding the truck will help to speed the clearing of the circuit's protective devices. Grounding the truck will not protect a worker who is not on an equi-potential mat bonded to the truck.

**Remember, if you're performing the work in-house, you're responsible.... If you out source it, you're responsible to make sure the contractor understands the hazards and protects their personnel.**