



**ROADS AUTHORITIES & UTILITIES COMMITTEE**  
**(SCOTLAND)**

**ADVICE NOTE 25**

**UNIDENTIFIED BURIED OBJECTS**

**Version 1**  
**12 December 2015**



# **UNIDENTIFIED BURIED OBJECTS**

## **Version History**

Version	Date	Notes
0.1	December 2015	Initial draft.
1	December 2015	Approved by RAUC(S) on 2 December 2015.

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## UNIDENTIFIED BURIED OBJECTS

### 1. Introduction

Unidentified Buried Objects (UBOs) are buried objects which have no clear owner. While UBO is a broad term, for RAUC(S) purposes it includes any apparatus which would normally fall within the general definition of utility, Section 109 holder or roads authority apparatus but where there is no identified or traceable owner. Such objects can be found during excavation works and may be historical in nature.

While there is no legislative prescription over how this information is to be stored or shared this advice note gives guidance on best practice when a UBO is discovered. The UBO can be recorded in either the gazetteer (RA only) or the Vault electronic plant information return of the organisation who found it.

### 2. Identification

Not all buried apparatus is legitimately a UBO. This process should only be used where:

- The Roads Authority or undertaker has identified the UBO directly;
- No owner can be found for the UBO;
- Ownership is not in dispute; and
- The apparatus is not intended to be removed by the RA.

General reports from the public or other sources that something may be buried should not be recorded unless verified. Only instances where the apparatus has been actually seen, or where evidence the apparatus exists is presented, should be considered.

A UBO must be shown to have no valid owner before it is recorded. Every effort must be made to identify the owner of the apparatus. In most cases the likely owner can be easily determined, but in more difficult cases the Scottish Road Works Register can be interrogated to identify organisations who work in the area. Further advice on identifying apparatus can be found in the *Code of Practice on Recording of Underground Apparatus in Roads*. Should there be any dispute regarding the ownership of a piece of apparatus advice should be sought from the relevant Area RAUC.

Where the owner of the apparatus can be identified the apparatus should no longer be treated as a UBO. The identified asset owner should be contacted and advised of their requirement to hold and share records, as described in *RAUC(S) Advice Note 1 - The Exchange of Plant Information*. In cases where the asset owner is regularly not sharing this information this issue should be reported to the Scottish Road Works Commissioner.

Under the *Roads (Scotland) Act 1984*, a roads authority has additional powers to remove unused/ownerless apparatus. If it is to be removed or filled in as part of other works there is no requirement to record the apparatus as a UBO.

### **3. Recording**

There are currently two methods available for the recording of UBO information on the SRWR. They are:

#### **Vault**

The recommended method for sharing the location of UBOs is for the information to be added to the organisations data submission to Vault. The apparatus should be clearly labelled as a UBO in the supplied data, to allow Symology to identify it as such. Where possible the type of asset (e.g. gas, electricity, water, telecoms etc.) should also be included.

#### **Gazetteer**

As well as recording the location on Vault, RAs have the option to add details of the asset to their Gazetteer. This is done by adding a Special Designation entry of type "Unidentified Plant". Further advice on this process can be found in *RAUC(S) Advice Note 5 - Scottish Road Works Register Associated Data*.