



Underground Utilities

REGULATIONS: UNDERGROUND UTILITY IDENTIFICATION & RESPONSIBILITIES

OSHA Standard Subpart P 1926.651(b)(1) The estimated location of utility installations, such as sewer, telephone, fuel, electric, water lines, or any other underground installations that reasonably may be expected to be encountered during excavation work, shall be determined prior to opening an excavation.

OSHA Standard Subpart P 1926.651(b)(2) Utility companies or owners shall be contacted within established or customary local response times, advised of the proposed work, and asked to establish the location of the utility underground installations prior to the start of actual excavation. When utility companies or owners cannot respond to a request to locate underground utility installations within 24 hours (unless a longer period is required by state or local law), or cannot establish the exact location of these installations, the employer may proceed, provided the employer does so with caution, and provided detection equipment or other acceptable means to locate utility installations are used.

OSHA Standard Subpart P 1926.651(b)(3) When excavation operations approach the estimated location of underground installations, the exact location of the installations shall be determined by safe and acceptable means.

OSHA Standard Subpart P 1926.651(b)(3) While the excavation is open, underground installations shall be protected, supported or removed as necessary to safeguard employees.

UNDERGROUND UTILITY IDENTIFICATION & RESPONSIBILITIES FACTS:

Underground utility strikes are both hazardous and costly. Nearly all such incidents incur significant expenses, and those involving gas or electric lines can pose severe risks to everyone nearby. The Common Ground Alliance (CGA) reports that over the past 20 years, utility strikes have caused \$1.7 billion in property damage, 1,906 injuries, and 421 fatalities.

Examples

- Sewer
- Oil
- Gas
- Water
- Electric
- Communications
- Steam

Know the Risk of Utility Line Strikes and Necessary Precautions and Requirements

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

1. Call 811 if public area.
2. Call the property owner if excavation area is on private land.
3. Have all lines properly marked two to three days prior to digging, even at home.
4. Never proceed on a hunch or on assumed locations.
5. Do not dig with machinery or pointed tools within the "tolerance zone" around marked utilities. The "tolerance zone" is a minimum (facility plus 18" on either side of the outside edge of the underground facility on a horizontal plane.

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SAFETY: FIRST. LAST. ALWAYS!

6. Use "soft digging techniques" such as hand digging with blunt edged-tools or vacuum excavation.
7. Dig test holes periodically to ensure a "tolerance zone."
8. When working in a facility or on private property that has a lot of lines installed by a private company the lines most likely will not be part of the 811 system.
9. Use ground penetrating radar, private locators, as-built drawings, and individuals with experience with the facility to locate potential lines before excavating.
10. Document a proactive well-thought-out excavation approach prior to digging.
11. Pre-establish procedures to be in place for when issues arise during excavation, or a utility line is damaged.
12. The top three damage root causes are (45%) the excavation practice not sufficient, (31%) proper notification not made, and (18%) locating practices are not sufficient.



"---" OSHA, www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.651.

"Underground Utility Strikes Safety Talk." American Subcontractors Association Midwest Council Safety Talk, Sept. 2019, asamidwest.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Underground-Utilities-Strikes-Safety-Talk.pdf.

OUR PURPOSE

Lead. Make a difference. Build a better future!

OUR VALUES

Safety: First. Last. Always!

Steadfast Integrity: Be honest. Treat other with respect.

Exceptional Service: Align goals. Add value. Develop lasting relationships.

Commitment to Excellence: Take ownership. Constantly improve.

Focus on Team: Listen. Collaborate. Communicate. Execute.

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