

Excavation Safety

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Excavation safety is a term that covers a wide variety of subject matter. In this and the next two articles, we will cover Oregon One-Call rules and regulations. We will also cover Site Worker and Competent Person training requirements and responsibilities. In the third article in this series, we will walk through an overview of general excavation safety and trench protection systems.

There exists some confusion about when to call for which type of locates, the following is a breakdown of the rules governing these issues.

Emergency Locate – can only be called for in the event of existing service interruption, imminent threat to public safety or loss of property. For example; a service connection is leaking but there has not been a disruption of water service to the customer. In this case an emergency locate is not warranted. Example # 2; on the same leaking service connection scenario, the leak is occurring on the corp-stop on the mainline. It is causing a wash-out that threatens to under cut the pavement in the roadway. In this instance, an emergency locate is warranted because both a threat to public safety and a property loss is occurring.

48-Hour Notification – should be given for all day-to-day operations, small leaks that do not meet the criteria for an emergency locate, and anything that can be planned for in advance.

In addition the above two types of locate requests that are the most commonly used, there are two other types of locates that may be requested by the system operators.

Priority Locate – may be requested in a situation such as a small leak that does not meet the criteria for an emergency locate but in the operators opinion, it is likely that this minor problem may become major in the very near future. Another scenario where this type of locate may be requested is a high priority project that needs to be finished in a short amount of time. It should be noted that *there is no guarantee* that this locate will be completed in less than 48 hours.

Pre-Construction Survey – this locate should be requested if you have a construction project that is still in the planning stage. e.g... you are attempting to determine the location of all other buried utilities to determine on which side of the road you will place your new pipeline. The utilities and locating companies have **14 days** to complete this type of locate request.

A utility should always give the appropriate time frame for a locate request. If a utility makes a common practice of calling in an emergency locate when it is not warranted, one or both of the following may occur. The surrounding utilities will come to expect it and you will see a reluctance for them to drop what they are doing and rush right out to finish your locate. You and/or your employer may be assessed a stiff fine for failure to follow proper locate procedures.

When calling the Oregon Utility Notification Center to request a locate you must first acquire some basic information about your project site.

Caller ID # - if you know your frequent caller identification number it will speed up the request process.

Phone # - an office number and a back-up such as a cell number where you can be reached.

Type of Work – what will you be doing? Who is to perform the work? If an emergency locate, do you have crews on site?

County/City – what county are you in? what city are you in? if you are a rural system, what is the nearest city? For example, three miles southeast of Scottsville.

Job Location – Specific address, block number, nearest cross street, legal description. 123 Scott St. 500 feet north of Berry St. Township 8 S, Range 5 W Section 15.

Marking Instructions – how have you marked the excavation site? Are marked with white paint.

And lastly, give them any special remarks or considerations.

Oregon Utility Notification

Center

1-800-332-2344

Call Before You Dig!