



## OHIO PHCC ToolboxTalk

### Weekly Safety Meeting

### Call Before You Dig



## CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

*Throughout the United States, there are perhaps millions (if not billions) of underground utilities, some as close to the surface as a few inches, while others are ten to twenty feet below the surface.*

*Unfortunately, many of these underground utilities are dug up when a contractor is attempting to bury “new” utilities, sometimes actually disrupting fiber optic lines that transmit data around the world or worse, workers are killed.*

## CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

Most states have a **ONE-CALL CENTER**, a quasi-public state agency, that serves as a statewide clearinghouse for utility owners (C&P, AT&T, State Governments, Federal Agencies, etc.)

The **ONE-CALL CENTERS** have maps of almost all underground utility systems, and can plot locations to be visited by their “locate teams,” who come on-site and physically mark the utility’s estimated location (with various colors denoting what “type” of utility is being located).

## ONE-CALL STEPS

1. You **call the notification** (one-call) center...
2. Notification (one-call) **center informs** all member utilities in the area...
3. Member **utilities mark their lines**...
4. You **wait 48 hours** and call the TIE SYSTEM (Ticket Information Exchange) to check the status of utility lines. If all marked or clear, you may commence with excavation...
5. Or you **may wait 72 hours** before commencing excavation...
6. However, if you **see clear evidence of unmarked utility** lines...
7. **Call back** to the notification center for your area and report. Then wait 3 hours for the utility operator(s) to mark those line(s)...
8. Always respect the marks and flags. **Take all reasonable actions** to properly protect, support and backfill underground utility lines.
9. Immediately notify the utility if a damage, dislocation or **disturbance of an underground utility** line occurs.
10. If damage creates an emergency, **take immediate steps** to safeguard life, health and property.

## COLOR CODES FOR MARKING

Universal color coding is used by all One-Call Centers throughout the United States, so that the industry can ***readily identify the type of underground utility*** being located by the “markings” on the ground:

- WHITE Proposed Excavation
- PINK Temporary Survey Marking
- RED Electric Power Lines, Cables, Conduit
- YELLOW Gas, Oil, Steam, Petroleum, Gaseous Material
- ORANGE Communications, Alarms or Signal Lines
- BLUE Potable Water
- PURPLE Reclaimed Water, Irrigation & Slurry Lines
- GREEN Sewers and Drain Lines

Note that the color-coding system used by one-Call Centers was designed by the ***American Public Works Association (APWA)***.

The PINK (Temporary Survey Markings) code, and the PURPLE (Reclaimed Water, Irrigation and Slurry Lines) code were adopted more recently.

## HAND-DIGGING

Once an underground utility has been located (horizontal location, not vertical location), most One-Call Centers require the contractor to “hand-dig” until the utility has been physically located (you can see it).

The art of utility locating results from common sense, experience, and following time-honored procedures, as well as the judgment and direction of the jobsite “competent person.”

## DISASTERS/CATASTROPHIES/DEATHS

What oftentimes happens when an excavator “***hits***” ***an underground gas line***? In many cases, a fire/explosion results, often engulfing the excavator equipment, and the operator, who dies an agonizing death.

If a 10K electric line is hit, electrocution of the equipment operator usually follows. When communication lines are disrupted, its possible that National Defense Agencies throughout the country are disrupted for days.

*Almost weekly, throughout the country, a utility line of some type is hit, with explosions oftentimes following...and also one or more fatalities. How can this be avoided? By following statewide and nationwide One-Call Codes. Remember the acronym: CARE:*

Call before You Dig

Allow the required time for marking

Respect and protect the marks/flags

Excavate with care

*Best People. Best Practices.™*