

White-lining reduces damages

Over the years white-lining, or pre-marking as it is sometimes called, has proven to be one of the most successful damage prevention strategies of all time. In some states white-lining is a regulatory requirement under some circumstances to precisely guide locators to mark areas where excavation work is going to occur. Other states do not require pre-marking but whether or not there is a requirement, it is always a good idea to white-line your proposed excavation site.

Communication between the excavator and the locator is the theme of white-lining. All of us have heard the adage “a picture is worth a thousand words”. The same is true of white-lining. Excavators who want to be certain the locator understands where they will be excavating should always paint the area to be excavated so there is no confusion.

the office. The people in the office often are the ones responsible for calling in the dig ticket adding another layer of confusion to the mix.

- More often than not, locators are burdened with more locate ticket assignments in a day than they are physically able to accomplish in the time allotted. White-lining helps to ease the burden placed on the locator giving him more time to accomplish an accurate locate in a greatly reduced area.
- White-lining reduces the number of delayed locates. Every delayed locate increases the likelihood that a locator will fail to notify the excavator of the delay which adds to the confusion.



sometimes it's not enough. At-fault damages do occur even when the excavator does his best to take extra precaution. What often gets overlooked are the hundreds and maybe even thousands of times that damages are prevented by an excavator because maybe he went the extra mile to white-line his jobsite. This is why it is important for all excavators to document their damage prevention efforts as well as document their own success data with regard to damage prevention.

What often gets overlooked are the hundreds and maybe even thousands of times that damages are prevented by an excavator because they went the extra mile to white-line his job site.

Reasons to white-line every time

- White-lining is the next best thing to meeting with the locator in the field.
- Information provided by the excavator working in the field often is difficult to describe to their people working in

- White-lining reduces the potential for errors that cause damage for both the locator and the excavator.

The vast majority of excavators take many precautions to protect buried facilities but

Extra precautions to prevent damages

- Have the project manager or other supervisor review job-sites and do the white-lining personally.

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By Wayne Jensen, Excavator

- Identify your companies name with white-line marks.
- Photograph the white-line markings and geotag the images with GPS information.
- Voluntarily wait longer periods of time to begin excavating than required by law to be certain all locates are completed.
- Never mobilize to a site unless you have a positive response for “marked” or no conflict.
- Call for jobsite meets with locators after sites have

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been marked to determine the “confidence level” of the locator with regard to accuracy of locate marks.

- If the locator’s confidence level is low, then voluntarily hand dig beyond the state mandated tolerance zone just to be sure damage does not occur.

- Call the locator back to the site in all cases where a facility cannot be found as marked.
- Call back locators any time you find an unmarked facility of unknown ownership.
- Document the accuracy of all locates and communicate that information back to locators to provide important feedback to constantly improve the quality of locating. ■



DIGGING DEEPER!

BEST PRACTICES CHAPTER - EXCAVATION PRACTICES

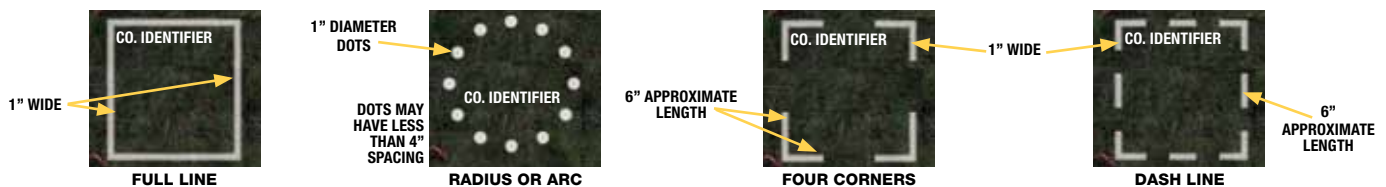
Practice Statement 5-2: When the excavation site cannot be clearly and adequately identified on the locate ticket, the excavator designates the route and/or area to be excavated using white premarking prior to the arrival of the locator.

Guidelines for Excavation Delineation

The following marking illustrations are examples of how excavators may choose to mark their area of proposed excavation. The use of white marking products (e.g., paint, flags, stakes, whiskers or a combination of these) may be used to identify the excavation site.

Single Point Excavation Markings

Delineate in white paint the proposed area of excavation through the use of: a continuous line, dots marking the radius or arc, dashes marking the four corners of the project; or dashes outlining the excavation project. Limit the size of each dash to approximately 6” to 12” in length and 1” in width with interval spacing approximately 4” to 50” apart. The maximum separation of excavation marks is to be reduced to a length that can be reasonably seen by the operator’s locators when the terrain or excavation site conditions warrant it. Dots of approximately 1” diameter are typically used to define arcs or radii and may be placed at closer intervals in lieu of dashes.



Single Stake Marking Center Point of Excavation Site

When an excavation site is contained within a 50’ maximum radius, or less, it can be delineated with a single stake that is positioned at the proposed center of the excavation. If the excavator chooses this type of delineation they must convey that they have delineated the excavation site with a single stake at the center of the excavation and include the radius of the site in the notification to the One Call Center. This single stake is to be white in color with the following information: excavator’s company identifier (name, abbreviations, or initials) and the radius of the excavation site in black letters on the stake or with a notice attached to the stake.

