

Locating & Marking Task Team Report

June 30, 1999

Safe and Livable Communities

Locating & Marking Task Team

The Challenge

- To help reduce the risk of damage to underground facilities
- To identify best practices for knowing, appropriately marking & effectively communicating the location of all underground facilities in connection with excavation activities

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Team Composition 24 Members

- Contractors
- Pipeline Operators
- State Governments
- Electric Providers
- Telecommunications
- Locators

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Best Practices

Criteria:

- Probability of damage reduction
- Feasibility
- Public safety
- Employer safety
- Conformance with existing standards

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Best Practices, cont.

- Three categories:
 - Facility records & locate documentation
 - Marking practices & communications
 - Training & personnel requirements

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Facility Records & Locate Documentation

- Locators utilize available facility records at all times
- If facility locators become aware of an error or omission, they provide information for updating records

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Facility Records & Locate Documentation, cont.

- Information on abandoned facilities is provided when possible
- Documentation of work performed on a locate is maintained
- A damaged facility is investigated as soon as possible after occurrence of damage

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Marking Practices & Communications

- A uniform color code & set of marking symbols is adopted nationwide
- Adequately marking for conditions
- Multiple facilities in the same trench are marked individually & with corridor markers

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Marking Practices & Communications, cont.

- Facility owner is identified
- Communications is established among all parties
- A single locator is used for multiple facilities
- Positive response is provided to facility locate requests

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Training & Personnel Requirements

- Locators are properly trained; locator training is documented
- Locates are performed safely
- A visual inspection is completed during the facility locate process

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Training & Personnel Requirements, cont.

- When locating electro-magnetically, active/conductive locating is preferable to passive/ inductive locating
- Forecasting/planning for predictable workload fluctuations

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Path Forward

- Continue development & commercialization of locating technology, improving accuracy, including depth (e.g., GPR, DOD imaging technology, GPS).

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Path Forward, cont.

- Improve accuracy of records & info provided on a locate request using:
 - A common database;
 - GPS; and
 - Other evolving technologies.
- Promote development & use of:
 - Biodegradable marking flags & paint
 - Intelligent marking systems for underground.

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Path Forward, cont.

- Automate documentation of locate performed (e.g., using GPS).
- Tie due dates for completing locates to the actual excavation start date.

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