

## Protecting America's Lifelines

America's network of underground facilities delivers vital resources to your home, your workplace, your community. Heat, light, water, and communications services all reach you through this network of oil and gas pipelines, telecommunications cables, and water lines. Critical services like air traffic control and local 911 emergency response also depend on this network.

This underground infrastructure is literally a lifeline -- and it is the safest, most reliable in the world. Keeping it that way is a responsibility we all share.

Preventing excavation damage to this network is a top priority for the U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS). Working together with facility operators, state and local governments, excavators, property owners, and concerned citizens, OPS has developed a comprehensive damage prevention program to protect underground facilities.

This brochure introduces the key components of this program, and invites you to find out more -- and to get involved. Everyone has a stake in protecting America's lifelines.



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Office of Pipeline Safety  
400 7th Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20590



## Office of Pipeline Safety



## Initiatives in Damage Prevention



United States

## OPS in Action

As part of DOT's commitment to safe and livable communities, OPS is responsible for assuring safe, reliable operation of pipelines that serve these communities. OPS meets this challenge through a variety of ongoing activities which address the problem of damage prevention.

These include:

- ◆ defining safety issues. OPS works with facility operators, excavators, locators, and others to pinpoint potential problems and to maintain a database on events to track data trends.
- ◆ identifying possible remedies. In an unprecedented government-industry collaboration, OPS assists with original research to develop new pipeline safety technologies.
- ◆ operating field programs. OPS works closely with state pipeline safety agencies and other groups to assess the quality of local damage prevention programs.
- ◆ maintaining regulatory oversight. OPS has responsibility for issuing and enforcing regulations governing pipeline transportation of natural gas and hazardous liquids.

## Office of Pipeline Safety Damage Prevention Initiatives

In addition to these ongoing efforts, OPS has several initiatives that bring together the full spectrum of the damage prevention community from both the public and private sectors. These initiatives seek the support and input of all those involved in damage prevention. Among these efforts are:

**Dig Safely Campaign.** In June 1999, DOT launched a nationwide damage prevention campaign. Industry and government collaborated closely on the "Dig Safely" campaign, which uses a variety of materials to raise damage prevention awareness among excavators, facility operators, public works employees and the general public. For more information, contact our web site: <http://ops.dot.gov/damage.htm>.

**State Partners.** OPS also provides funding to states to defray the costs of their overall pipeline safety programs, including inspections. OPS and its state partners work with pipeline operators to improve damage prevention practices, including use of Common Ground Best Practices. State pipeline safety programs work to educate operators about compliance, support new efforts in public education, and influence state laws. For more information, contact our web site:

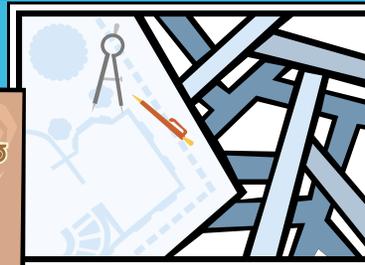
**Common Ground.** More than 160 volunteer experts identified over 100 damage prevention best practices in a report presented to the Secretary of Transportation. This year-long effort reflects an ongoing collaboration among excavators, locators, design engineers, facility operators, and regulators to improve damage prevention practices. OPS inspectors work with pipeline operators and others to promote adoption of Common Ground practices. OPS expects to provide the assistance and resources for the startup of a proposed non-profit, private sector foundation that will carry the Common Ground initiative forward. For more information, contact our web site: <http://ops.dot.gov/comgrnd.htm>.

**One-Call and Damage Prevention Grants.** Funding is provided 1) for public education, training, and enforcement; and 2) to increase effectiveness and operational efficiency of design; planning; one-call notification; locating and marking; and digging around underground facilities.

### Get Involved!

As these initiatives suggest, everyone has a stake in damage prevention — and everyone has a part to play.

Learn more — and get involved! For information about any of these programs, contact our web site: [ops.dot.gov](http://ops.dot.gov). or call OPS at (202) 366-4595.



### Contact Information

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