EXCAVATOR MANUAL

Call Before You Dig
Wait the Required Time
Confirm Utility Response
Respect the Marks
Dig with Care

Know what’s below.
Call before you dig.
Preface

The purpose of this document is to provide a basic understanding of your responsibilities under **16 NYCRR Part 753**, (also cited as Industrial Code 53 or Code Rule 53) concerning safe excavation practices and the protection of underground facilities in New York State.

This document is not intended as a legal reference, and does not contain the complete text of **16 NYCRR Part 753**.

A complete copy of 16 NYCRR Part 753 is available from:

**New York State Public Service Commission**
3 Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12223-1350
Administration: (518) 474-5453

**Dig Safely New York, Inc.**
5063 Brittonfield Parkway
East Syracuse, NY 13057
Administration: (315) 437-7394
www.digsafelynewyork.com

**New York 811**
60 Knickerbocker Avenue
Bohemia, New York 11716
Administration: (800) 524-7603
www.newyork-811.com

For information on Pipeline Safety, contact:
**National Pipeline Mapping System**
For more information about the pipelines and pipeline operators that might be located in your community, you can contact the National Pipeline Mapping System at: [www.npms.rspa.dot.gov](http://www.npms.rspa.dot.gov)
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Your One-Call Center

Why Do I Need To Call Before I Dig?
It’s the law in the State of New York, and it is also a necessary part of planning your work. Reviewing your work and your work area prior to the actual excavation or demolition can help save you and your company from unexpected downtime, loss of revenue and injury.

A safe excavation or demolition can be achieved by following the suggestions and processes outlined in this manual.

Who We Are
Dig Safely New York, Inc. (serving all of New York State excluding NYC and Long Island) and New York 811 (serving only NYC and Long Island) are the One-Call centers serving as a link between you, the excavator, and the utility owner operators. We take your calls and transfer the information to the utility operators.

Dig Safely New York, Inc. & New York 811 do not mark lines!

Call Center Hours
Both centers take location request calls, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Call Center Operation
The following will take place after you have provided all of the appropriate information to the one-call operator (Customer Service Representative).

» The Customer Service Representative will read all the information back to you. Listen carefully and verify the read back for accuracy.

» You will be given a list of member utility owners the One-Call Center will notify.

» You will also be given a location request number as proof of your call and a reference. Write down that number and retain it for your future records. It can be used to check real time status of the utility operator’s responses at www.digsafelynewyork.com through our APR system.

» Remember, not all utilities and municipalities are members of the one-call system. If you are aware of any other underground facilities, you should contact that operator directly.
1. You must call for a location request at least two working days but not more than ten working days before any excavation or demolition starts. (Excluding holidays & weekends).

2. You must call regardless of where the planned excavation or demolition is located. Even if it is on private property, out in the middle of a field, or on a street that has no name, you must call.

3. You must call even if you are only excavating a few inches or just surface grading. If you move material, you must call.

4. You must call even if the property owner tells you the site has no buried facilities, or he or she knows where buried facilities are located.

5. Make sure you have a proper location request. Don’t rely on old marks, or another excavator’s marks or stake out request. No piggybacking.

6. Mark out the area you plan to excavate with white paint, flags, or stakes. (See page 5 for details.)

7. When investigators from the Public Service Commission (PSC) inspect an excavation or demolition site, or investigate damage, they will check to see if you have a proper location request.

8. Review the Location Request Information Sheet so you will know what you need when you call (see page 4).

9. Part 753 defines an emergency as: Any abnormal condition which presents immediate danger to life or property including discontinuance of a vital utility service necessary for the maintenance of public health, safety and welfare.

10. For emergency excavations or demolitions notify your one-call center with the location of the emergency excavation or demolition as soon as possible! To constitute an emergency, you must be on-site or on the way to the site to do the work.
Excavation

An excavation is defined as any operation for the purpose of movement or removal of earth, rock, pavement, or other materials in or on the ground by use of mechanized equipment or by blasting.

Excavations and demolitions include, but are not limited to:

- Demolition of Structures
- Drilling
- Cable or Pipe Plowing or Driving
- Grading
- Setting Poles
- Trenching
- Driving Survey Pins
- Digging
- Installing Sign Poles
- Scraping
- Boring Holes for Percolation Tests
- Razing
- Ditching
- Dredging
- Auguring
- Tunneling
- Moving Earth
- Wrecking
- Backfilling
- Saw Cutting
- Plowing In
- Pulling In
- Jackhammering
- Fence Post or Pile Driving
- Milling
- Tree Root Removal/Stump grinding
- Pile Driving
- Boring
Location Request Information Sheet

Company ID#: ___________________________ Today’s Date: ______________

Company Name: ________________________________

Company Mailing Address: ________________________________

City: ___________________________ State: _______ Zip: ____________

Phone: ___________________________ Fax: ___________________________

Email: ________________________________

Field Contact Name: ________________________________

Phone: ________________________________

Name or Company for whom you are doing the work?

__________________________________________________________

*NYS Law requires at least two full working days advance notice, not including the day you call.

Start Date: ___________________________ Start Time: ___________________________

Duration of job: ________________________________

Days / Hours / Months / Weeks / Years / Unknown

Excavation Site State: New York

County: ________________________________

City / Town / Village

Street Address: ________________________________

The TWO nearest cross streets the address is located between:

Near Street 1: ________________________________

Near Street 2: ________________________________

Where on the property are you excavating?

Depth of Excavation: ________________________________ Inches / Feet

Length: ___________________________ Feet / Miles / Meters Width: ___________________________ Inches / Feet

Type of Work: ________________________________

Means of Excavation: ________________________________

Will there be Blasting?  □ Yes □ No

Will there be Boring or Directional Drilling?  □ Yes □ No

Is the Dig Site within 25ft from the edge of the road or in the road?  □ Yes □ No

Will you be Digging on both sides of the road?  □ Yes □ No

Is the Excavation marked in WHITE?  □ Yes □ No
Guidelines for Marking Proposed Excavations

The following is only a guideline. Refer to the current Common Ground Alliance (CGA) Best Practices for complete details. www.commongroundalliance.com

These illustrations are examples of how excavators should mark the area of proposed excavation. Use white marking products (paint, flags, stakes, whiskers or combination) to identify the excavation site.

Single Point Excavations Markings

Mark with **white paint** the proposed area of excavation by using: a continuous line, dots marking a radius or arc, dashes marking the four corners of a project or dashes outlining the excavation project. Make the dash about 6” to 12” in length and 1” in width. Space them between 4’ to 50’ apart. Make the marks close together enough to be seen by the Operator’s locators. Dots of about 1” in diameter are typically used to define arcs or radii and can be placed at closer intervals instead of dashes.

Using A Single Stake To Mark The Center Point of Excavation Site

When an excavation site is contained within a 50’ radius, or less, you can mark it with a single stake positioned at the center of the proposed excavation. If you choose this way of marking, you must tell the One-Call Center you have marked the excavation site with a single stake at the center and include the radius of the site. The stake has to be white and have this information on it: excavator’s name, abbreviations, or initials, and the radius of the excavation site in black letters on the stake or a note attached to the stake.
Wait The Required Time

1. Before you begin any non-emergency excavation or demolition you must call your One-Call Center and make a location request, at least two but not more than ten working days before your excavation or demolition begins (not including the date of your call).

2. Do not start an excavation or demolition before your stated commencement date and time!

3. Weekends and holidays are not working days and are not counted in the two to ten days between the date of your location request and your commencement date (see Holidays below).

4. If your excavation or demolition has not started within ten working days of the stated commencement date, your location request will no longer be valid, and a new location request is necessary.

5. If the excavation or demolition work is completely cancelled, that must be reported to the One-Call Center.

6. Once excavation or demolition has begun, the location request is good for the life of the excavation or demolition. The excavator is responsible for maintaining the marks from the stated commencement date. (See page 8)

Holidays:

New Year’s Day ................................................... January 1
Martin Luther King Day ............... 3rd Monday in January
Presidents Day ......................... 3rd Monday in February
Memorial Day .............................. Last Monday in May
Independence Day ............................... July 4
Labor Day ................................. 1st Monday in September
Columbus Day ............................ 2nd Monday in October
Veteran’s Day .............................. November 11
Thanksgiving Day ............... 4th Thursday in November
Christmas Day .............................. December 25
Confirm The Utility Response

1. Remember, facility operators will only mark-out facilities for which they are responsible.

2. Facility operators owe you a positive response through APR, and you are responsible for making sure each operator on your ticket has responded.

   (a) Automated Positive Response (APR) System:
   A system established by the one-call notification system to furnish a single point of contact between member operators and excavators for the purpose of communicating the status of an excavation location request as provided by the member operators.

3. By law, a facility operator can delay marking out your excavation site a maximum of two working days. However, any delay of more than two working days will require your consent.

4. If you do not hear from a facility operator identified on your location request before your stated commencement date, call the facility operator’s contact number. Do not begin excavation or demolition! If you do not have the contact number, please call your One-Call Center, OR utilize the APR system to verify responses and contact information at www.digsafelynewyork.com.

5. It is important you provide accurate field contact numbers when you call the One-Call Center for a Location Request; this is the number facility operators will call if they need to contact you regarding your location request.
Respect The Marks

1. You are responsible for maintaining the marks set down by facility operators at your site.

2. Before you begin your excavation or demolition, walk-through the site to familiarize yourself with the markings and the locations of buried utilities. It is a good practice to photograph, videotape or make a sketch of the marks.

3. Pay special attention to any changes in the direction of the underground facilities.

4. If your excavation or demolition will cause the removal or disturbance of markings, establish offset marks in order to maintain a reference point for those underground facilities.

5. Make sure everyone involved in your excavation or demolition is aware of any established offsets, any compromised marks, or any other information regarding facility locations.

6. Don’t put spoil piles over markings. Avoid driving machinery over stakes and flags. Paved areas should be swept periodically so painted marks remain visible.

7. If marks have faded or been compromised to the point where proper and safe excavation or demolition is no longer possible, call your One-Call Center and make a request for a re-mark.

8. If your project is interrupted for more than ten working days, call your One-Call Center and make a request for a re-mark.

9. If you refresh the markings at your site, make sure you use the uniform color code and identification letters to avoid any confusion. Make a note of the date and actions taken to refresh the marks.

10. Once the project is complete, it is recommended you remove any marks as best you can. This will reduce the likelihood future excavators will mistake them for marks provided in response to their own excavation notice, or assume they do not need to provide notice of intent to excavate.
Guide To Marks

The following is only a guideline. Refer to the current Common Ground Alliance (CGA) Best Practices for complete details. www.commongroundalliance.com

1. Utility lines must be indicated by markings using current APWA uniform color codes. Markings should be 12” - 18” in length and 1” wide.

2. The owner of a facility should be indicated by initials or by name in letters 6” high at the beginning and end of the locate. On long locates, the facility owner should be indicated every 100’.

3. For operators with multiple facilities within an excavation area, for example bundled or stacked facilities, the total number of lines within the ground should be indicated when known.

4. If a facility is known to be present but the total number of lines for a facility cannot be determined a corridor marker may be used indicating the approximate width of the facility if known.

5. When known, the size of the line being located should be indicated. Line size should indicate the outside diameter of the pipe or structure.

6. Conduit or duct structures, whether single or multiple conduits or ducts, should be indicated by the conduit symbol indicating the approximate depth of the structure.

7. When known, the pressure of a gas facility should be indicated.

8. When known, termination points, dead ends and stub outs should be indicated.

9. Offset markings should be used when there is a strong likelihood that marks may be destroyed for example, (if placed directly over the facility).

Continued on next page.
The following is only a guideline. Refer to the current Common Ground Alliance (CGA) Best Practices for complete details. www.commongroundalliance.com

Marking Gas Lines
High Pressure

Marking Transmission Point, Dead End, Stub Outs

Marking Offsets
Indicate - Facility owner, direction to facility & distance to facility

No Conflict
(No facilities within the requested area)

Conduit Or Duct Markings

Marking Buried Splices, Valves, Manholes

Corridor Marking
Identification when number of facilities is not readily known
Dig With Care

1. Before you use powered equipment within the tolerance zone (see page 13), you must:
   » Verify the location, type, size, direction of run and depth of the facility.
   » For gas and liquid petroleum lines, verification must be by means of hand-dug test holes.
   » The location of other utilities must also be verified by means of hand-dug test holes unless otherwise agreed upon with the facility operator.

2. Do not assume that buried facilities will be at a certain depth.
   » Facilities may have been originally installed at a prescribed depth, but later erosion or grade changes cause them to now have shallow or deep cover.

3. Verification by a hand-dug test hole requires the facility to be exposed to view.
   » If after a diligent search the facility cannot be verified in this manner, notify the facility operator. Do not assume clearance.

4. Vacuum excavation is an accepted means of verifying the location of marked facilities.

5. Powered equipment may be used for removing pavement, but only to the depth of the pavement.
   » Care and good judgment should be used when removing pavement.
   » Avoid starting the pavement break directly over the marked facility.
   » Wherever possible, start a few feet away from the marks and attempt to ‘peel’ off the pavement or break it into small chunks for removal.

Continued on next page.
6. Verify the location of utilities before you excavate up to the edge of the tolerance zone.

» It is a good practice to assign workers to do the utility verifications ahead of the excavating crew. You’ll be providing a greater margin of safety and any problems can be resolved in time to minimize interference with the excavation.

7. If the excavation is going to cross a tolerance zone, dig a test hole to expose the facility at the point of crossing.

8. If your excavation is going to parallel a utility, you should dig test holes at any marked change of direction, elevation and at branch connection.

9. For relatively straight excavations parallel to a utility, a test-hole should be dug approximately every 20’ to 25’ or as requested by the facility operator.

10. If you find an unmarked or unknown facility, and you can tell who the facility owner is, notify them. Otherwise, notify the One-Call Center.
Tolerance Zone

The tolerance zone is defined as:
- 2 feet on either side of the designated center line of the facility if the diameter is not provided.
- Or, 2 feet from each outside edge if the diameter is provided.

For example:

**Measuring The Tolerance Zone**

The facility at left is marked as being 20- inches wide. So, 24” on each side, plus the width of the facility, gives us a Tolerance Zone of 68”.

The facility at right is marked with its location, but shows no width. So, 24” on each side, gives us a Tolerance Zone of 48”.

**Example of the tolerance zone**
Excavation After Verification; Damages and Breaks

1. When excavating close to an underground facility, it is a good practice to have a spotter assist and guide the machine operator.

2. After you have verified the location of a facility by hand digging, you must maintain a minimum clearance of 4” between the facility and any mechanized equipment.

3. If the excavation work requires significant spans of the facility to be exposed, support them to prevent sagging or collapse.

4. Take care not to damage the protective coating of a facility. If you do, leave the damaged facility exposed and immediately call the facility operator.

If a Facility is Contacted or Damaged

1. If you damage a facility you must immediately call the operator whose facilities have been damaged, even if you only scrape the protective coating. Left untreated this type of damage can lead to a catastrophic failure.

2. You should keep the emergency number of your local facility operators readily available. (See page 19)

3. If you are in doubt about whose facility it is, call your One-Call Center. They will transmit a notice to all facility owners in the area.

If You Break a Natural Gas, Petroleum or Propane Line, Follow These Steps:

1. Stop work and evacuate the site.

2. Call 911. (**NYS Law**)

3. Call the appropriate facility operator.

4. Don’t do anything that could cause a spark.

5. Alert everyone on the premises.

6. Keep the public and traffic away.

7. Tape, rope or place cones around the area.

8. Stay upwind of blowing gas.

9. Do not try to fix a damaged pipe.

10. Do not try to extinguish a gas burning fire, unless there is a threat to life.
Leak Recognition and Response

A gas leak is usually recognized by smell, sight, or sound.

» **Smell:** Natural gas is colorless and odorless. A distinctive, pungent odor is usually added so you’ll recognize it quickly.

» **Sight:** You may see a white cloud, mist, fog, bubbles in standing water, or vegetation that appears to be dead or dying for no apparent reason.

» **Sound:** You may hear an unusual noise like roaring, hissing, or whistling.

**What to do if you suspect a leak**

» **Move** to a safe environment.

» **Call** the pipeline operator (see page 19) – they are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Provide the exact location, including cross streets. Let them know if sewer construction or digging activities are going on in the area.

» **Do not** smoke or operate electrical switches or appliances.

» **Do not** assume someone else will report the condition.

**Reporting Emergencies**

Part 753 Emergency Requirements: In the event of an emergency involving danger to life, health or property as a result of damage to an underground facility containing gas or liquid petroleum products or as a result of an electrical short or escape of gas or hazardous fluids, the excavator must:

A) Proceed to evacuate his or her employees and all other endangered persons from the immediate vicinity to the best of his or her ability and;

B) Immediately notify 911 and the operator of the affected facility of the exact location, nature of the emergency and of the underground facility which is affected.
Pipeline Purpose and Reliability

Natural gas, propane and petroleum pipelines quietly, reliably, and efficiently deliver a product for residential, commercial, and industrial use.

The pipeline industries work very closely with government agencies and stay abreast of new security methods and technologies to ensure the highest levels of security. Individual companies evaluate their security procedures on a regular basis and continually enhance security programs as needed.

Hazard Awareness & Prevention Measures

Like all forms of energy, natural gas, propane and petroleum must be handled properly. Despite an excellent safety record, a leak caused by damage to a pipeline may pose a hazard and has the potential to ignite. The pipeline industry works diligently to ensure pipeline safety through a variety of measures including...

» Coordination with One-Call Centers
» Inspection programs
» Design and construction practices
» Workforce qualifications
» Industry safety practices and government oversight
» Pipeline markers and facility mapping
» Public education programs

Pipeline Locations

Since pipelines are underground, line markers are sometimes used to indicate their approximate location along their route. The markers display the material transported in the line, the name of the pipeline operator, and the telephone number where the operator can be reached in the event of an emergency. Markers only indicate the general location of a pipeline and cannot be relied upon to indicate the exact position. The presence of markers does not negate the requirement to notify the One-Call Center prior to excavation.
Suggestions & Reminders

**DOs**

» Do as required by NYS Law, report immediately to 911 and facility operator any damage to underground facilities resulting in escaping flammable, corrosive, explosive, toxic liquids, gas, or electrical short.

» Do follow the special instructions from facility owners regarding their lines.

» Do keep a minimum of 4” clearance between any safely exposed underground facility and any powered equipment.

» Do protect and preserve the color-coded markings until those markings are no longer needed for a proper and safe excavation.

» Do call for a re-mark if the markings are destroyed or removed before excavation is complete, and allow two working days to re-mark the site.

» Do be sure that someone other than the equipment operator, for example the spotter, is there to look for any sign of an underground facility.

» Do conduct the excavation near the underground facility carefully. Excavate by hand to be able to tell the exact location of the line and to prevent damage.

» Do report any damage to the facility operator. For example, cracked conduit, gouges, dents or breaks to the coatings, cable sheathes and cathodic protection anodes or wiring that may pose problems now or in the future. Allow the underground facility operators time to make repairs.

**DON’Ts**

» Don’t call in a location request unless you are prepared to start on the stated commencement date or ten working days thereafter.

» Don’t assume a pipeline or cable runs straight, or is centered between permanent marker posts.

» Don’t assume the depth of a utility. Never assume an underground facility is at the same depth throughout the entire route of an excavation.

» Don’t excavate within the tolerance zone with mechanized equipment before verification.

» Don’t phone in emergency locates that are not really emergencies (crews should be on site or in route).

» Don’t work under anyone else’s location request.
I-Notice Internet Notification

Dig Safely New York has two ways to enter ticket location requests online: I-Notice and Single Address Tickets.

Using either the I-Notice or Single Address Ticket Program allows you the freedom to create location requests on the Internet, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with no training requirements or hold time on the phone. Our new intuitive systems now guide you through the ticket request easier and faster.

The I-Notice system is for professional excavators that will be using the program frequently to request stakeouts for excavation jobs, or for jobs that occur at multiple addresses. For more information on i-notice, visit www.digsafelynewyork.com/excavators/i-notice.

The Single Address Ticket program is for the low-volume excavator or homeowner to submit a location request for a single address, or one time excavation. No credentials are needed for this system, only a valid email address. For more information on Single Address Tickets, visit www.digsafelynewyork.com/homeowners/single-address-ticket.

Advantages of using our online ticket request systems:

» Available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
» Request stakeouts on your time, anywhere you have Internet access. No more waiting.
» Print out a copy of your ticket for your records.
» Parcel Map data is now available so you don’t even have to map out where you plan to dig.
» Verbal transcription errors are eliminated.
» Manage all your tickets online.
» Free and easy to use.
Emergency Numbers

Please take the time to write down the numbers of emergency services and facility operators you may need in the field.

Police: _____________________________________________

Fire Department: _______________________________________

Gas: _________________________________________________

Electric: ____________________________________________

The list you receive from the Customer Service representative (CSR) can also be found in APR. Log into APR by clicking the APR icon that says “Check the status of existing ticket” under excavators. Enter your ticket number and phone number to locate the ticket information.

Operator | Phone Number
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The Best Practices Excavation

Here are eleven simple steps to a best practices excavation:

1. The excavator visits the site, and marks out every place he or she may be excavating with white paint, flags, or stakes.

2. The excavator fills out all the information about the excavation on a One-Call Center Location Request Information Sheet, (see page 4), then calls in the location request to the One-Call Center.

3. The One-Call Center Customer Service Representative takes the information, and gives the excavator a File Reference Number and a list of members (facility operators) notified. The excavator writes these down on the Location Request Information Sheet for later reference.

4. The excavator then notifies any nonmember facility operators (nonmember facility operators are not contacted by the One-Call Center).

5. Each member facility operator either marks out their facilities at the work area, or determines the work area is clear, and then responds to the Automated Positive Response (APR) System.

6. The excavator verifies that he or she has received responses from all utilities through the Automated Positive Response (APR) System and takes photos of the markings for documentation.

7. The excavator begins work on the scheduled work date and time, if all the facility operators have responded, taking care to find and preserve any markings the locators have made.

8. Before beginning any excavation or demolition, the excavator identifies the tolerance zone and any place the work area crosses a gas or liquid petroleum line (“cross section areas”). When digging near a buried facility, the excavator observes the tolerance zone around that facility.

9. Before excavating or demolishing in a tolerance zone or any cross section areas, the excavator verifies the location of underground facilities by hand-dug test holes.

10. If exposing a facility, the excavator provides proper support and protection for it so the facility will not be damaged.

11. When the excavation is complete, the excavator provides proper backfill for any facilities having been exposed, and removes all utility markings.
## Legal Mark - Outs Example Calendar

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APWA Uniform Color Codes

For Marking Underground Utility Lines

- **White**: Proposed Excavation
- **Pink**: Temporary Survey Markings
- **Red**: Electric Power Lines, Cables, Conduit & Lighting Cables
- **Yellow**: Gas, Oil, Steam, Petroleum & Gaseous Material
- **Orange**: Communications, Alarm, Signal Lines, Cables or Conduit
- **Blue**: Potable Water
- **Purple**: Reclaimed Water, Irrigation & Slurry Lines, Radioactive Material
- **Green**: Sewers & Drain Lines

Measuring the Tolerance Zone

![Diagram showing Tolerance Zones for Proposed Excavation](image)

- **TEL**
  - Tolerance Zone: 24”
  - Additional Marking: 20”

- **GAS**
  - Tolerance Zone: 24”
  - Additional Marking: 24”

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