



Toolbox Talk

Volume 20: Don't Risk It!

Topic: Maintaining marks & Contacting utilities if marks are lost

Underlying Rule: 16-345-4(c)(7) The excavator must avoid the covering or removal of surface markings prior to the actual excavation in the vicinity of located facilities. If surface marking are disturbed to the extent the contractor cannot identify the approximate location of the facility, the contractor must contact the utility to request remarks.

Scenario: A contractor was installing a sewer main when they damaged a natural gas service line. The contractor knew a gas line was in the area based on seeing the gas meter sets and the valve box in the sidewalk near their area of excavation. The area had been marked, but all marks were removed by their excavation. No marks still existed at the time of excavation and the contractor assumed the gas service ran straight from the visible valve box to the center of the roadway. The contractor chose to excavate away from the area he believed the line was located and then damaged the natural gas service line. The contractor notified 911 and the public utility. PURA reviewed the report and determine the contractor failed to maintain the utility markouts and failed to request marks once they lost track of where the gas service was.



What should have been done?

After it was determined that a gas line was present in the area of excavation and marks no longer existed for it, excavation activities should have stopped and the gas company should have been contacted to markout the service line. Once the natural gas service line was properly marked and then exposed by hand digging, mechanized excavation activities can continue in the area.

Lessons Learned:

- It is important to be aware of your surroundings. If you see valve boxes, meter sets, or other above ground clues indicating the presence of underground utility facilities but no additional markings near them, it could be an indication of unmarked facilities within your area of excavation.
- If there are no clear marks for a facility, don't assume that you know where it is.
- If you have reason to believe an unmarked facility is present in the area of excavation it is the excavator's responsibility to contact the corresponding public utility to have area checked and any unmarked facilities marked.

Crew Sign-in		Training Conducted by: _____		Date: _____	
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CBYD Toolbox Talks are designed as quick training tools for use by excavator's safety or management personnel to have brief but meaningful discussions about safe excavation practices. These talks are based on real incidents that have occurred in Connecticut or significant incidents elsewhere in the country.

For questions or additional training, contact Sean Morris of PURA at (860) 827-2888.