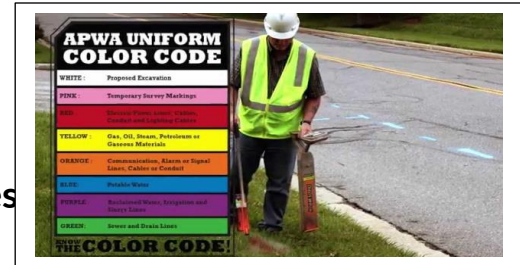




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## TOOL BOX TALK April 24, 2023 Underground Utility Strikes



Underground utility strikes are a dangerous and costly event. Almost all line strikes are extremely dangerous for the workers and community and expensive. In 2020, 385,381 utility damage events took place across Canada and the U.S. Here are some quick statistics:

- Contractors/ developers were responsible for the majority of damage incidents.
- Telecommunications was the #1 type of facility damaged, followed by natural gas.
- The equipment responsible for the most damage incidents was a backhoe/ trencher, followed by hand tools.
- The top three damage root causes were notification not made (31%), excavator dug prior to doing test holes/potholes (15%), and facility marked inaccurately (7%).

### Excavation Best Practices to Avoid Utility Line Strikes:

- **Always call Miss Utility** to have lines properly marked at least 4 days prior to digging, even at home. Miss Utility notifies utility owners of your plans to dig. They will then have their utility locators respond to whether the utility is Marked or Cleared. Once you have confirmed all affected utility owners have responded to your request, you are able to dig.
- Do not dig with machinery or pointed tools within the “tolerance zone” around marked utilities. The Tolerance Zone in **Maryland** is comprised of the width of the facility plus 18” on either side of the outside edge of the underground facility on a horizontal plane. Some states may require a larger tolerance zone. Use “soft digging techniques” such as hand digging with blunt-edged tools or vacuum excavation.
- Stop excavation and call Miss Utility if unmarked utilities are discovered, or utilities are not found where they are marked.
- When working in a facility or on private property that has a lot of lines installed by a private company, the lines most likely will not be part of the Miss Utility system. Use other methods such as ground penetrating radar, private locators, as-built drawings, and individuals with experience with the facility to locate potential lines before excavating. Having a proactive well-thought-out approach prior to digging is important to avoid underground utility strikes.
- Procedures need to be in place for when issues arise during excavation, or a utility line is damaged.
- Study the drawings for the job.

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