

Independence Damage Prevention Best Practices Implementation

The city of Independence is in the process of reviewing and adopting the following additions to their right-of-way ordinance which will allow them to implement the damage prevention practices.

Definitions

AREA OF CONGESTED UNDERGROUND FACILITIES means any location in the right-of-way where underground facilities are found or are presumed to be in close proximity to one another.

EXCAVATION OR EXCAVATE means any act by which earth, asphalt, concrete, sand, gravel, rock or any other material is cut into, dug, uncovered, removed, displaced, relocated, excavated, tunneled, bored, graded, or bulldozed, and shall include the conditions resulting therefrom of the surface or subsurface material or earth in the right-of-way.

EXCAVATOR means any company or individual that is or will be cutting, digging, excavating, tunneling, boring, grading or in some other manner altering the surface or subsurface material or earth in the right-of-way.

FACILITY OWNER means any owner of an underground facility that is in place or being placed in the rights-of-way of the City.

HAZARDOUS UNDERGROUND FACILITY means any underground facility that if cut or damaged would threaten the lives of the excavators or those in proximity of the cut or damage. These shall include underground electric cables and underground natural gas pipes.

MIS-DESIGNATED FACILITY means any underground facility which is found to be located at a location other than where indicated on drawings or by temporary or permanent locating markers.

NEW UNDERGROUND FACILITY means any facility to be placed in the ground in the right-of-way of the City. A repair of a facility or a replacement or upgrade of a facility may be determined to be a new facility by the Public Works Director or any designee, if they determine that the nature of the replacement or repair lends itself to the inclusion of tracer wire and warning tape

POTHOLING means the practice of digging a test hole to expose underground utilities to ascertain the horizontal and vertical location of the facility.

TOLERANCE ZONE of an underground facility means the strip of land equal to the width of the underground utility, plus two feet (2') on either side.

TRACER WIRE means wire that is placed adjacent to a nonmetallic underground facility in order to facilitate location of the facility. The wire must be a minimum 12 AWG cooper wire coated with a minimum 30-mil polyethylene jacket designed specifically for buried use.

TRENCHLESS TECHNOLOGY means any technology, including horizontal directional drilling, which is used to excavate that does not create a continuous trench along its path.

UNDERGROUND FACILITIES means any pipe, tube, cable, wire, fiber optic line, concrete encasement, or other facility that is placed in the right-of-way and located underground.

VITAL UNDERGROUND FACILITIES means any underground facility that if cut or damaged would have the potential of preventing residents or businesses from contacting emergency services. These shall include underground telephone and fiber optic cables.

WARNING TAPE means tape used to provide excavators warning that they are approaching an existing underground facility. The tape must be made of polyethylene, a minimum 3.5 mils thick, and a minimum of three inches (3") side with black lettering imprinted on a color coded background that conforms to APWA color code specifications.

CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS FOR NEW AND EXISTING FACILITIES.

K. Any excavator prior to excavating in the right-of-way of the City must pothole when the following circumstances are present:

1. Whenever an excavation, including one using trenchless technology, will be within the tolerance zone of an existing underground facility
2. Whenever an excavation using trenchless technology will parallel an underground facility within three feet (3') of that facility, potholing is required every one hundred feet (100').
3. Whenever an excavation will cross existing underground facilities.
4. Whenever an excavation will be in the vicinity of an area of congested underground facilities.
5. Whenever an excavation is within three feet (3') of a hazardous or vital underground facility.

L. The preferred method of excavating a pothole is air vacuum excavation.

1. When air vacuum excavation is not feasible then the preferred method of potholing is the use of water vacuum excavation or hand digging.
2. If water vacuum excavation is used the excavator shall make sure to take adequate precautions to protect existing underground facilities.

M. If an excavator decides to use a backhoe to pothole this should only be done while using proper procedures, including the use of a spotter.

N. Prior to potholing, the State one-call system shall be contacted.

O. A mis-designated facility or one that is not located should be reported to the facility owner and the one-call system along with property location information.

P. When potholing, exposed underground facilities should be protected and supported.

Q. Any facility owner and any excavator placing a new nonmetallic underground facility in the public rights-of-way of the City by direct burial is required to place a Tracer Wire and Warning Tape with the underground facility.

1. Tracer Wire shall be placed no further than six inches (6") to the side or above the facility, but not in-touch with the facility.
2. Warning Tape shall be placed twelve to eighteen inches (12"-18") above the facility and at least six inches (6") below grade.
3. The Warning Tape shall be identified with the type of utility and the name of the owner of the facility. The background color of the Warning Tape shall conform to the American Public Works Association color identification system for type of utility.

R. Any facility owner and any excavator placing a new metallic underground facility in the public rights-of-way of the City by direct burial is required to place Warning Tape with the underground facility.

1. Warning Tape shall be placed twelve to eighteen inches (12"-18") above the facility and at least six inches (6") below grade.
2. The Warning Tape shall be identified with the type of utility and the name of the owner of the facility. The background color of the Warning Tape shall conform to the American Public Works Association color identification system for type of utility.

S. Any facility owner and any excavator placing a new nonmetallic underground facility in the public right-of-way of the City by trenchless methods is required to place a Tracer Wire with the underground facility.

1. If conduit or innerduct is used the tracer wire can be preinstalled or blown in after conduit or innerduct installation.
2. If conduit or innerduct is not used then the tracer wire should be installed as an integral part of the facility installation.

T. Any facility owner or excavator placing tracer wire with the construction of an underground facility per this Article will assure that the tracer wire is accessible at least every three hundred feet (300').

1. Access points may include valve boxes, hand-holes, manholes, vaults or other covered access devices. Access point covers should be clearly marked with the type of facility.

U. While digging in the right-of-way of the City any excavator cutting a tracer wire must:

1. Notify the owner of the facility.
2. Notify the Public Works Director of the City.
3. Repair the tracer wire according to specifications provided by the Public Works Director of the City.

V. The Public Works Director, or any designee, may approve other permanent identification techniques requested by the facility owner or excavator if the Public Works Director determines that the alternative technique will provide equal or greater protection.”