

Hazards posed by striking buried underground utilities include property damage, injury, electrocutions, and even explosions.

In addition to OSHA rules, workers should be aware that there may be specific state, municipal, or local rules for **“Call before you dig”** where the work is being done.

- Always **respect the markings and flags** placed by the locating service.

OSHA Standard 1926.651(b)(1) states that *the estimated location of utility installations, such as sewer, telephone, fuel, electric, water lines, or any other underground installations that reasonably may be expected to be encountered during excavation work, shall be determined prior to opening an excavation.*

- **Call 811** from anywhere in the country **a few days prior to working** on excavations or trenches and the call will automatically be routed to the local one call center.
- Prior to excavation and calling before you dig some states require contractors to **“white line”** the area **proposed** for excavation.
- **“White line”** the area by painting arrows, dashes, dots, or lines in the area the crew will be digging before the locate service arrives.

OSHA Standard 1926.651(b)(2) says that *utility companies or owners shall be contacted within established or customary local response times, advised of the proposed work, and asked to establish the location of the utility underground installations prior to the start of actual excavation.*

COLOR CODE FOR MARKING UNDERGROUND UTILITIES

PROPOSED EXCAVATION

TEMP SURVEY MARKINGS

ELECTRIC – POWER

GAS – OIL – STEAM

TELCO – COMMUNICATIONS

POTABLE WATER

RECLAIMED WATER

SEWER – DRAIN LINES