

IOWA 811

ONE CALL

The Official Newsletter of Iowa One Call

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Excavator

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WHAT'S UP BELOW



Iowa One Call More Relevant Than Ever

Iowa One Call, along with all other state one call systems and the services they provide, is more relevant and more important today than ever before. The growing demand for services provided by underground facilities requires ongoing expansion of the underground facilities infrastructure. So too, does the demand for continued construction necessitate an ongoing need for excavating procedures. The potential for conflict – the possibility of encountering underground facilities when digging – is a growing concern. Heightened scrutiny of the damage prevention industry by local, state and federal agencies emphasizes the seriousness of the rules and laws that regulate excavation safety and damage prevention requirements and best practices.

The Federal Government has a keen interest in how effectively state one call programs are operated, as can be seen by the annual state damage prevention and enforcement evaluation proceedings conducted by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), a division within the U.S. Department of Transportation. In 2016, PHMSA deemed multiple states, including Iowa, to be inadequate in their one call enforcement programs (as of the time of this writing, PHMSA's finding for 2017 have yet to be published). Since the results

of the 2016 evaluation, the Iowa Attorney General's Office has pledged to examine their one call enforcement program and address areas deemed inadequate by PHMSA, including a more progressive approach to collecting and handling one call-related complaints and a broader approach to investigating potential violations by locators, underground facility operators, and excavators. On a state level, the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) recently filed a docket to conduct an investigation of how Iowa One Call protocols are implemented, including the processes that underground facility operators utilize to document and report one call-related compliancy issues and excavation-related damages to their infrastructure. The IUB is also reviewing additional measures for conducting investigations into potential one call violations, including a possible collaboration between the IUB and the IA Attorney General's Office; in which the IUB would assist the AG's Office with one call-related investigations, including complaint-driven investigations and damage incident investigations.



During the late 1970's and early 1980's, the serious nature posed by excavation-related conflict with underground facilities was the catalyst for developing the one call industry, which grew rapidly out of the need to streamline a communications process between contractors/excavators and underground facility operators – Iowa One Call was started back in 1980. Nearly forty years hence, the underground facilities infrastructure has grown exponentially. According to Iowa One Call Spokesperson, Ben Booth, there has never been a greater need or demand for excavation safety protocols than there is today. The roles that excavators and locators play in excavation safety and damage prevention are nothing short of critical, yet according to Booth there are still significant deficiencies being reported in the way certain excavating and locating practices are conducted. “We routinely hear of excavations that have occurred without the required locate notices, or that locators have failed to respond within the required timeline,” said Booth. Asked why these types of deficiencies still occur, even when the nature of excavation-related conflicts with underground facilities is so critical, Booth said, “I believe the matter has a lot to do with complacency – which can impact the priority placed on safety, as well as improper planning – which leads to haste. Excavators and locators typically operate under demanding timelines and budget constraints. A lost day, or even a few hours of delay can offset production. The stress of keeping on track with deadlines and budget constraints can lead to cutting corners, and even worse, neglecting safety standards.”

“ Even though the need for enforcement may seem unnecessary – given the significance of damage prevention and what’s at stake – enforcement is nonetheless a necessary component of the one call process. ”

Safeguarding the underground facilities infrastructure is all about the safety and wellbeing of people: Construction personnel working on projects near potentially hazardous facilities, residents living in the vicinity of such construction projects, or communities that rely on the essential services provided by underground facilities. The importance

of the complying with the requirements of the law cannot be overstated. “The fact that high level state and federal agencies have taken such an interest in the Iowa One Call program serves to strengthen the importance of excavation safety and damage prevention, and the significance of notifying Iowa One Call before conducting any type of digging or excavating,” said Booth. “It makes sense that the one call industry be scrutinized and evaluated for effectiveness. Even though the need for enforcement may seem unnecessary – given the significance of damage prevention and what’s at stake – enforcement is nonetheless a necessary component of the one call process.”

The majority of excavators and locators, who are diligent in following the ‘Iowa One Call laws’ and employing effective damage prevention practices, likely will not feel the impact of a more progressive enforcement policy. Those who cut corners, neglect to follow the law, or fail to embrace effective damage prevention standards, may find themselves under investigation, and may face civil penalties. All three agencies involved in enforcing Iowa’s one call and damage prevention requirements, PHMSA, the IUB, and the IAAG’s Office, have made it clear that enforcement measures may be taken against any parties who violate the requirements of the law, including underground facility operators, the locators who are employed by underground facility operators, and contractors/excavators.

It’s true that Iowa One Call is more relevant and important today than ever before, but so are the people who make the system work. Excavators and locators play a vital role in safeguarding the citizens and underground facilities of Iowa. Underground facility operators, one call center personnel, enforcement and regulatory agency personnel . . . all serve to maintain effective damage prevention measures and to ensure public safety. All stakeholders within Iowa’s damage prevention industry are more relevant and important today than ever before, because their responsibilities and the demands of their jobs continue to grow along with the ever-expanding underground facilities infrastructure and evolving construction industry.



GOVERNOR REYNOLDS PROCLAIMS APRIL AS SAFE DIGGING MONTH

Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds met with representatives from Iowa One Call (IOC) and Common Ground Iowa (CGI) on Wednesday, March 28, 2018 at the State Capitol to sign the “April is Safe Digging Month” proclamation.

April marks the start of spring digging season. Governor Reynolds, IOC and CGI are encouraging homeowners to call 811 before they dig to prevent injuries, property damage and inconvenient outages. The Common Ground Alliance reports that every nine minutes an underground utility line is damaged because someone decided to dig without first calling 811.

Recognizing April as “Safe Digging Month” is an important and effective method to educate Iowans about the importance of having underground facilities located before digging.

“ *By having underground lines marked, homeowners are making an important decision that can help keep them and their communities safe and connected.*

“We join the governor in strongly encouraging individuals and companies to call 811, or by ‘clicking’ online at iowaonecall.com, before they begin digging,” said Ben Booth, Iowa One Call Communications Manager. “By having underground lines marked, homeowners are making an important decision that can help keep them and their communities safe and connected.”

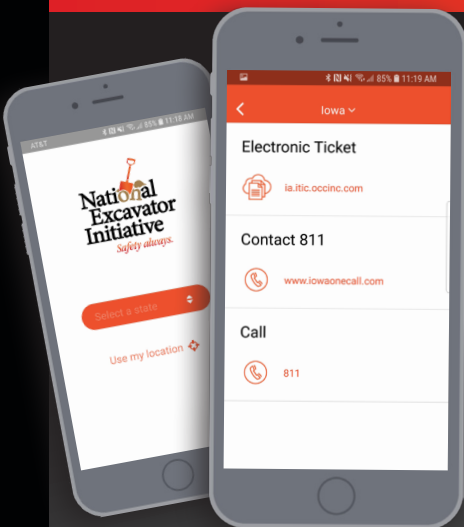
Safe digging begins with creating a free notice to Iowa One Call by going online to iowaonecall.com or by dialing 811. Iowa law requires at least 48-hours advance notice before breaking ground (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays). Facility operators will mark their facilities in line with the American Public Works Association (APWA) Uniform Color Code. It is best to avoid digging within 18-inches on either side of the paint and flags in the area known as the “tolerance zone.” If the project requires digging within the 18-inch tolerance zone, this



must occur by hand-digging measures (no mechanized equipment should be used within the tolerance zone).

Striking a single line can cause injury, repair costs, fines and inconvenient outages. Every digging project, no matter how large or small, necessitates a notice to Iowa One Call. Installing a mailbox, putting in a fence, building a deck and laying a patio are all examples of digging projects that require a notice before starting.

Visit www.iowaonecall.com for more information about 811 and safe digging process.

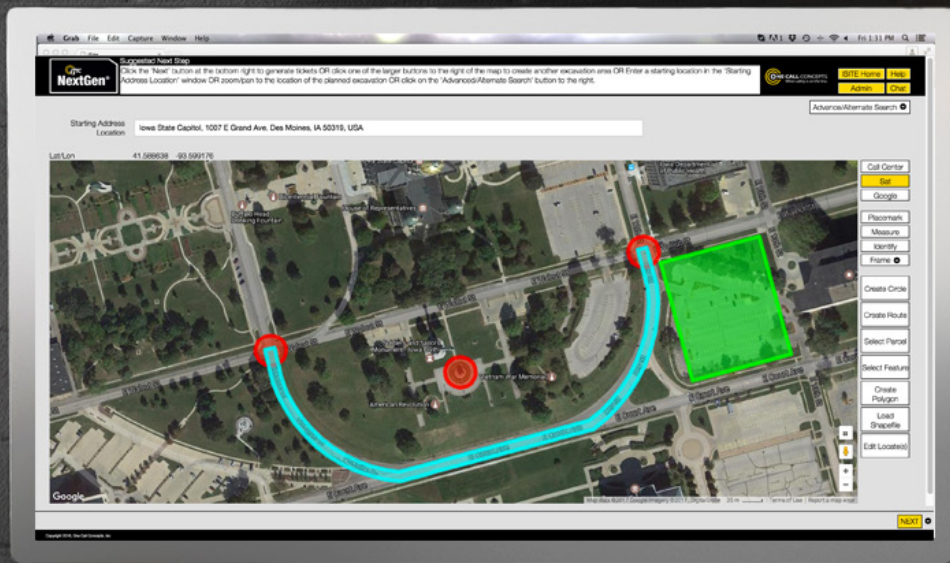


In February, Sander Resources released the **Safe Excavator mobile application**. Excavators can use the app to identify statutes and regulations related to preventing damages to underground facilities in all 50 states. Users are able to find important elements of each state's one call requirements and navigate by topic. A checklist has been built to assure a safe, compliant excavation is completed. Additionally, learn how to recognize gas leaks, when to file an emergency notice and the proper steps to reporting a damage. Emergency contact information is available for Alliant Energy, Buckeye Pipeline, Magellan and Northern Natural gas.

Download the app for free in the Apple App Store or in the Google Play Store.



TIPS FOR MAPPING PRECISELY AND ACCURATELY



**CHECK OUT THE NEXTGEN ONLINE
TICKETING TUTORIAL [HERE!](#)**

1. Use the right tool for the job – ITIC NextGen offers a diverse array of mapping options to fit every scenario.
2. Don't over-map – ITIC NextGen builds the locate request from the mapping. Over-mapping a work area can result in wasted time and resources.
3. Double-Check your work – use the different map views and/or google street view to help ensure you've mapped accurately and completely.



EXCAVATION SAFETY AWARENESS PROGRAM RECAP

The Excavation Safety Awareness Program allows Iowa One Call to meet directly with stakeholders to educate them on updates to the one-call procedure and best practices. The busy contractors, farmers and facility operators are able to escape the cold to learn, ask questions, and enjoy a free meal. Since 2000, Iowa One Call has traveled the state for the Excavation Safety Awareness Program. The 2018 program visited 17 towns and saw an overall attendance of more than 2,800.



The presentation topics were based on stakeholder feedback and included:

- Locating Delays
- Maintaining Marks / Requesting Relocates
- Effective Online Ticketing
- Private Facilities / Utility Demarcation Points
- Verifying Locate Status via Online Ticket Check ([Insert link to Ticket Check](#))
- Appropriate Follow-up Measures
- White-Lining Requirements

DELAYED LOCATES

In Iowa, locates are required to be completed within 48-hours of the notice being filed. It is important to remember that Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays do not count toward the 48-hours. While a dig ticket can be filed 24/7, any notice received after 5:00 PM will be processed as if received at 8:00 AM the next business day.

LOCATOR AND EXCAVATOR RELATIONSHIP

Effective communication drives the one-call system. With a tight timeline to complete the locating of underground facilities, it's important to establish and maintain two-way communication. Excavators are responsible for setting the blueprint for the locator to complete their work. The online ticketing system, NextGen, provides two great resources for transmitting thorough information the first time. The mapping tools and the written description should be used in tandem to create a precise notice of excavation. The mapping tools allow excavators to customize their proposed excavation. When a quality written description supplements the mapping file, locators will be ready to complete the task.

If a ticket is not clear to the locator, they may status it as "Not Marked, Inadequate Information." This status requires the locator to follow up with the excavator, asking them to supply additional information.

Locators are typically responsible for a specific geographic area. If your work often occurs within the same city, get to know your locator. Exchange contact information and establish a two-way relationship. It's likely to help your projects to move forward in a timely manner. Remember to provide a detailed written description, use the proper mapping tools, and physically white-line the proposed excavation site!



VIDEO LINKS

Two videos were presented at the 2018 ESAP meetings.

The first highlighted the NextGen ticket system. Two locators were interviewed to provide insight to what they are looking for when a ticket comes to their computer. The second video is a message from the Iowa Attorney General office, which enforces the Iowa One Call law. Tom Miller and Jake Larson discuss recent penalties and provisions in Iowa along with the potential civil penalties for a non-compliant excavation.

ESAP 2019

The locations will be set by the fall of 2018. Registration will open around Thanksgiving. If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please send an email to seth hale@netins.net.



IOWA UTILITIES BOARD WORKSHOP RECAP



On December 8, 2017, the Iowa Utilities Board filed Docket INU-2017-001 in an attempt to gather information to help increase the overall effectiveness of the Iowa One Call process. Public comments were accepted and gathered by the Iowa Utilities Board via an online filing system in advance of the February 27 workshop held at the IUB Court Avenue offices. The IUB stated that the goal was “to establish best practices for locating natural gas pipeline facilities and other underground utilities, inform all persons involved in locating and digging around underground facilities about best practices, and educate the public on the dangers of digging and measures that can reduce or eliminate those dangers.”

Representatives from the Iowa Attorney General’s office, Black Hills Energy, Interstate Power and Light Company, MidAmerican Energy, CenturyLink, National Utility Contractors Association, and the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives were in attendance. Members of the IUB asked each organization about protocol for reporting damages and complaints to the Attorney General.

The IUB receives federal grant money from the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). In recent years, PHMSA has conducted evaluations of each state’s one call enforcement processes. In 2017, PHMSA found Iowa and many other states’ overall enforcement processes to be lacking or inadequate. Geri Huser, IUB Chair, made comments stating the intention of the docket was to ensure Iowa receives a satisfactory rating on future PHMSA evaluations.

The IUB went into closed session and the next steps are to be determined. No orders have been filed by the IUB at the time of this writing.



IN THE NEWS



Local Excavation and Safety News From Around the Web



The Direction TV Series Premiere

www.facebook.com/TheDirectionwithMarkStowe

The Direction TV series premiered on March 27, 2018. Tune in for a special Iowa One Call shout out in the episode! Download the Pursuit Channel "We Deliver The Outdoors" app to watch it on your mobile devices. [\[Download for IOS\]](#) [\[Download for Android\]](#)

Officials: Refrigerator likely touched off home explosion

www.kcci.com

Authorities say a refrigerator likely touched off an explosion of natural gas that ripped through a house in Fort Dodge. The four residents had just been told to leave the house when the blast occurred Feb. 14. Two were unharmed. Two were taken to a hospital ... [\[more\]](#)

Water line break caused about \$500K in roadway damage

www.journal-news.net

Roadway damage caused when a major water line in Ranson was punctured during a contractor's underground drilling in December could cost as much as \$500,000 to repair, city officials reported. About 40,000 gallons of water escaped from the high-pressure utility pipe before it could be shut off ... [\[more\]](#)

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