

# Washington State Damage Reporting

## First Quarter 2013 Analysis

### Introduction

Mandatory damage reporting began in Washington state on Jan. 1, 2013. Anyone who witnesses or causes damage must report that event to the Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) within 45 days. The primary focus of this reporting is to allow the commission to evaluate the effectiveness of the law as a damage prevention program. Since January 1, the UTC has been monitoring the data submitted to identify trends in Washington's damage picture.

As directed by the statute, damages are reported to the Damage Information Reporting Tool (DIRT) administered by the Common Ground Alliance (CGA). This database serves to gather meaningful data regarding the occurrence of facility events and to identify local and national trends in damages. DIRT provides industry stakeholders with a way to anonymously submit data into a comprehensive database for analysis of the factors that lead to events.

This Washington DIRT report provides a summary and analysis of the submitted events occurring during the first quarter of 2013 (Jan. – March). To generate the most accurate analysis of damage events, it is important that damages are reported to DIRT within the 45 day timeframe set forth in the statute. Any damages occurring during that time which were submitted after the 45 day period will not be included in the analysis report.

Because this is the first opportunity we have to review damage events our analysis will be relatively superficial. We believe in the coming months and years with continued reporting, the UTC will be able to provide a more comprehensive report as to trends and influences affecting damage events in Washington and the effectiveness of the state's damage prevention program.

### Reported Events and Total Damages

As it stands, 190 stakeholders are subscribed to the UTC's DIRT page. Of those stakeholders, 99 are currently sharing their data with the UTC. What does this mean? It means that when damage is submitted to DIRT only events provided by the 99 "sharing" stakeholders can be included in the analysis of Washington damage events. This report will reflect analysis of the data from those 99 stakeholders and their damage events only. *(If you are currently subscribed to the UTC's DIRT and NOT sharing your data, [click here](#) for directions on how to do so.)*

The number of events submitted to the UTC's DIRT for first quarter 2013 is 459. Again, this only reflects damages submitted by data "sharing" stakeholders. We believe this is a fraction of the actual number of damage events occurring during this time frame. According to the one-call center, 73,955 calls were received during first quarter 2013.

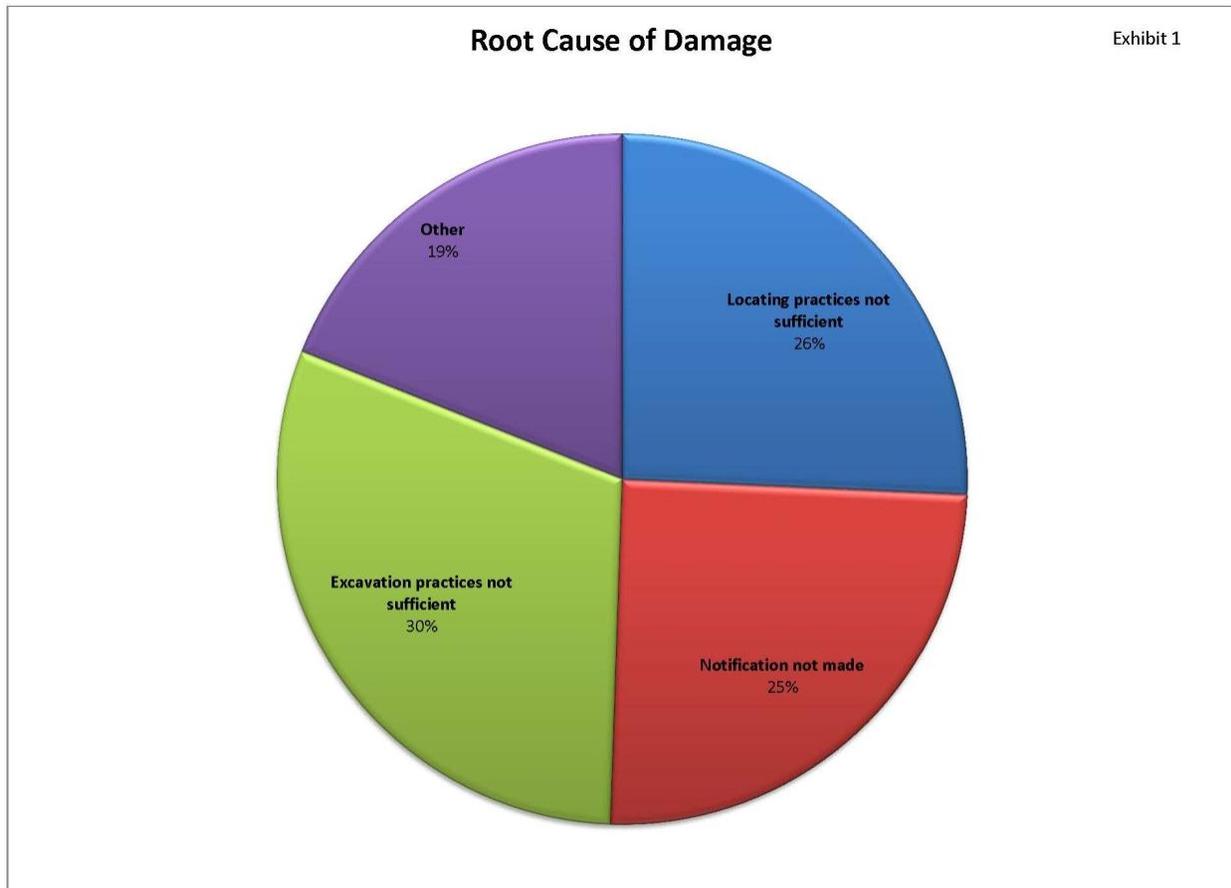
These calls resulted in 429,518 tickets sent to utilities. When the average damage rate calculated by the CGA in their 2011 DIRT report of five damages per 1,000 locate requests is applied to Washington's first quarter ticket numbers, estimated damages should be around 2,100. This is significantly more than the 459 reported. Keep in mind, the number calculated by the CGA is an average taken from 34 states. Some of those states experienced much higher damage rates with others having a lower than five damages per 1,000 tickets average. We don't know where Washington may fall on the spectrum which is why it is important all damages are reported to DIRT.

We will continue to work with facility owners and excavators to increase damage reporting.

## Analysis

### What is causing damage? (Exhibit 1)

From the data reported thus far, there is a somewhat even distribution of damages among all four root cause categories: Excavation Practices Not Sufficient; Notification Not Made; Locating Practices Not Sufficient; and Other. With greater data one or more of these may begin to take the lead as to the leading cause. With further education and enforcement, the number of people not calling for a locate prior to digging will hopefully decrease, in turn decreasing the number of damages overall.



### Who is reporting? (Exhibit 2)

Almost half of the damage reports received during first quarter were submitted by pipeline companies.

The other categories of facility operators are reporting relatively evenly. We would expect to see the telecommunication damage reports higher since they have the second highest damaged facilities. We do know that the state's largest telecommunications companies are not currently sharing data, therefore the current number reflects this under-reporting.

Excavators comprise six percent of damage reporters making them up the smallest category of reporting stakeholder groups. This indicates that more education and outreach needs to be focused on this group to ensure they know their responsibilities and how to access resources to come into compliance.

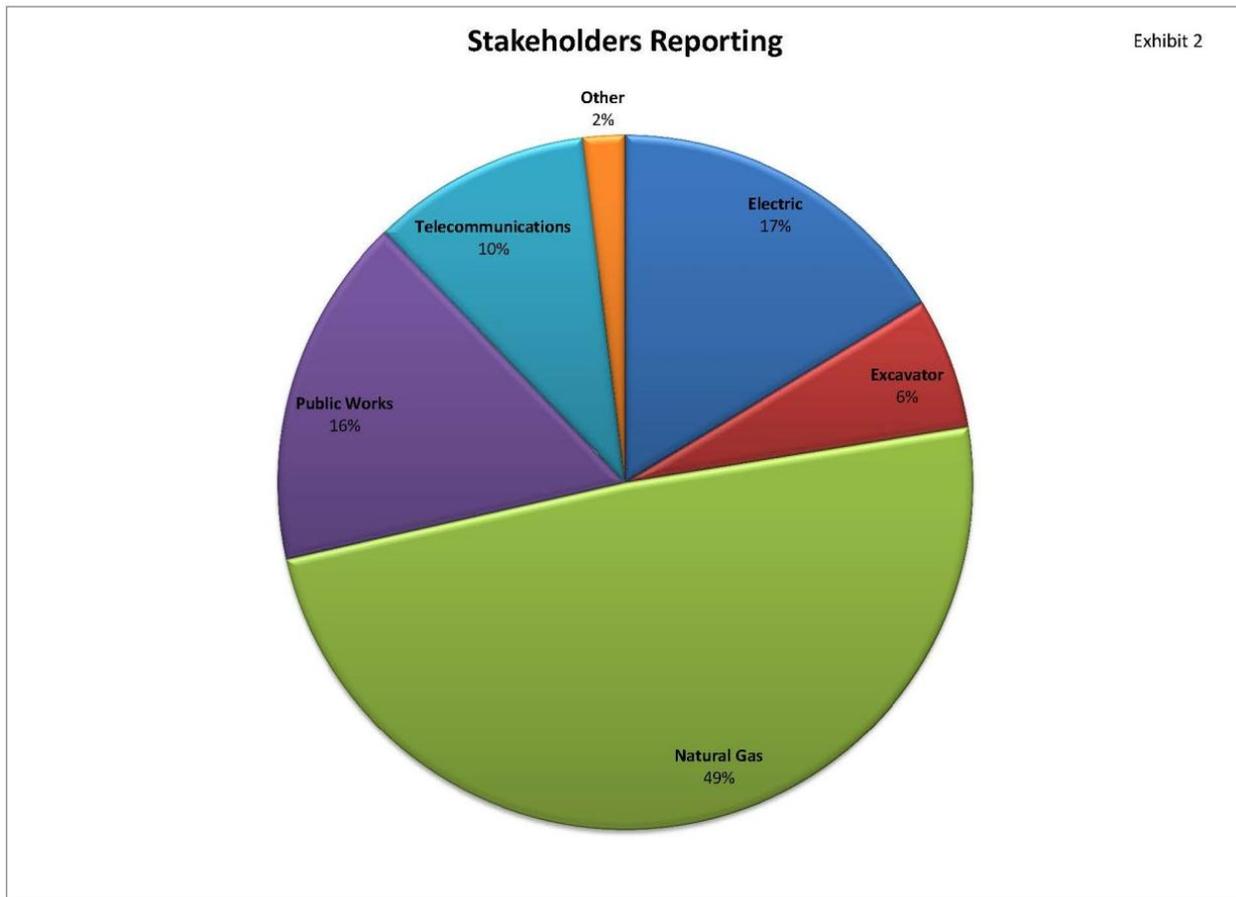
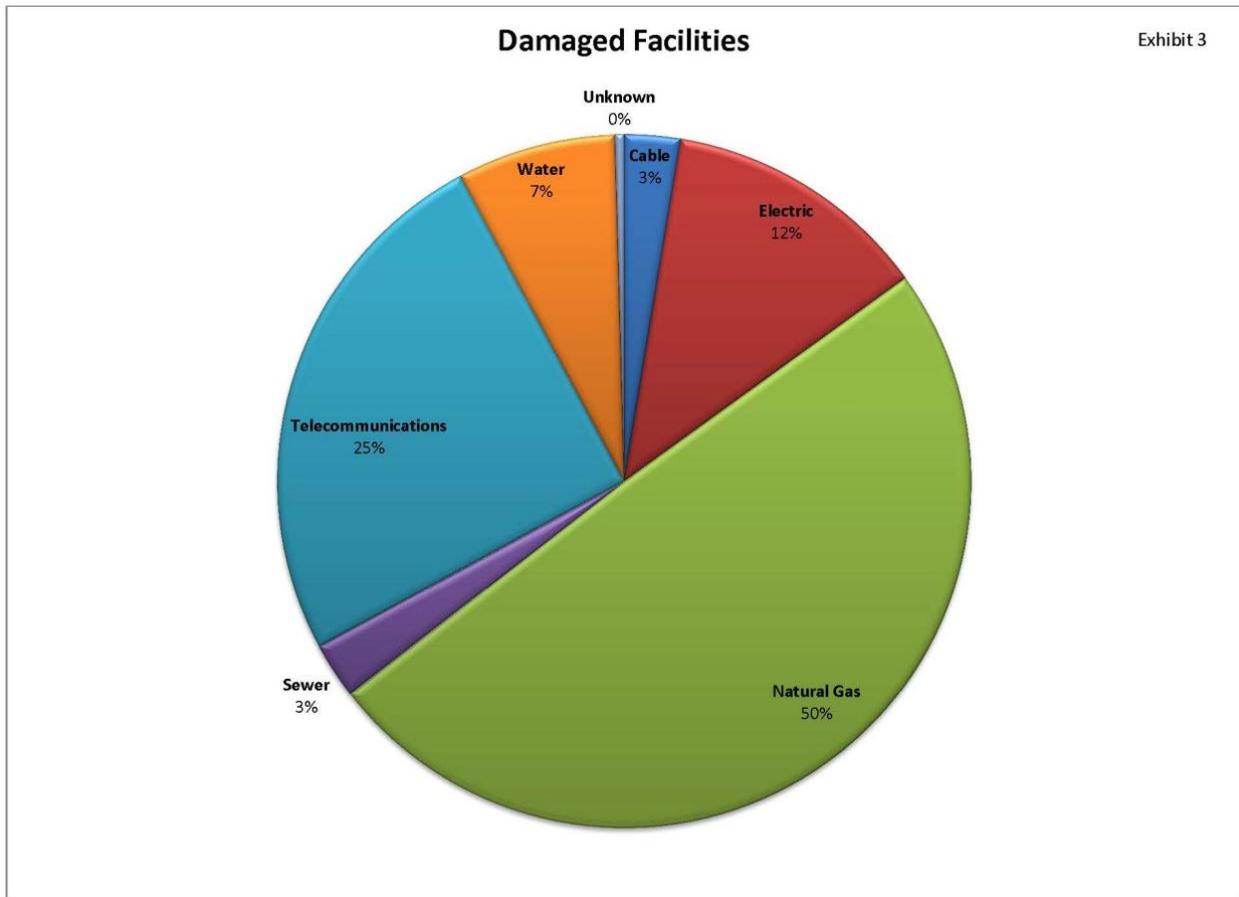


Exhibit 2

### What is being damaged? (Exhibit 3)

With pipeline companies comprising 50 percent of the damage reports, their facilities represent the highest rate of damages in our data.

The next most frequently damaged facility is telecommunications. As mentioned before, because this number is a quarter of the total damages reported, we would expect that more telecommunications stakeholders would be reporting these damages. This is not the case leaving the assumption that the person causing damage is reporting the majority of these incidents.



## Conclusion

We need more data and time. More stakeholders need to subscribe, share and input their damage data so that the data reported more closely represents what is occurring in the field.

It is inappropriate to draw conclusions based on three months' of incomplete data.

We do not know how many damages actually occurred during the period covered by this report. There are a number of statistical models used throughout the country to estimate the average damages per one-call tickets however at this point, we are uncomfortable making any deductions as to what Washington damages should be.

With each quarter, we expect to see Washington's damage picture becoming clearer. In the meantime, we will continue to collect data and work on increasing the number of companies reporting.

