



Consumer Help Line
888-333-WUTC (9882)
consumer@utc.wa.gov

TTY
800-416-5289

Damage Prevention
360-664-1118

Media Line
360-664-1116

Outreach and Education
360-664-1110

The UTC regulates the services of privately or investor owned utility and transportation companies. Our mission is to ensure that services are fairly priced, available, reliable and safe.

Regulated companies:

- Telephone
- Electricity
- Natural Gas
- Water
- Garbage
- Recycling
- Residential Movers
- Charter Buses
- Airport Shuttles
- Commercial Ferries
- Natural Gas Pipelines
- Railroads

General Information
360-664-1160
www.utc.wa.gov

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1300 S Evergreen Pk Dr SW
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Washington's Dig Law Excavator Responsibilities

Washington's dig law, RCW 19.122, was established in 1986 to protect the state's vulnerable underground utility systems from damage caused by digging. In 2009, the federal government required each state to create, or update, their current dig law to include a number of standards intended to increase safety and keep up with the changing industry. In response to this request, a stakeholder group was established and after two years of work, an updated version of RCW 19.122 was passed by the Legislature.

When did the new law take effect?

The updated version of RCW 19.122 went into effect January 1, 2013. You are now required to follow the requirements detailed below when you dig.

What has stayed the same for excavators?

The basics haven't changed. You are still required to call 811 for a free utility locate two business days before any digging project. You also cannot begin digging until your locate has been completed.

What has changed for excavators?

There are many changes to the old law. Most importantly, excavators are now required to **outline their dig area in white paint** prior to calling for a locate.

If you have a **large site**, or will be digging in **multiple sites**, you must **confer with the facility operator** to enable them to locate underground facilities before digging begins for each phase of work.

Another important change is you must **maintain the locate marks for 45 days**. After that, the marks expire and you will have to call for a new locate if you plan to continue with your project.

What else is new?

The most significant change to Washington's dig law is the creation of a **Safety Committee** that will hear complaints of alleged violations of RCW 19.122 and recommend penalties to the Utilities and Transportation Commission.

Dig Law—Excavator’s Responsibilities

There has also been a **reporting requirement** added to the new law. Facility operators or excavators who observe or cause damage must report any scrapes, gouges, cracks, dents or other visible damage to the utility to the Utilities and Transportation Commission via the online Virtual DIRT program **within 45 days** of the incident.

What are the penalties for violating RCW 19.122?

If you are found in violation of RCW 19.122, you can be subject to the following penalties:

- Dig without calling two days in advance, pay a \$1,000 fine (up to \$5,000 for each subsequent violation within a three-year period).
- Dig without calling and damage a hazardous liquid or gas utility, pay a \$10,000 fine and triple the repair costs.
- Dig within 35 feet of a transmission pipeline without calling, you may be found guilty of a misdemeanor that can carry a penalty of up to 90 days in jail.

For more information

If you have questions about Washington’s dig law or would like more information, call 360-664-1118. You may also visit the commission’s dig law website at www.utc.wa.gov/diglaw.

Resources

Virtual DIRT

www.utc.wa.gov/damagereporting

Safety Committee

Washington-ucc.org

ITIC – online locates

www.callbeforeyoudig.org

Washington 811

www.washington811.com

Common Ground Alliance

www.call811.com