

Washington State Damage Reporting

Q4 2019 DIRT Analysis Oct. - Dec. 2019



Introduction

This Washington Damage Information Reporting Tool (DIRT) report provides a summary and analysis of submitted damage events occurring during the fourth quarter of 2019. For the most accurate analysis of damage events, it is important that damages are reported to DIRT within the 45 day timeframe set in statute.

Trends

Damages are down in this quarter when compared to the Q4 reports over the last two years. A total of **550** DIRT reports were submitted, compared to 626 in 2018 and 602 in 2017. Since there was a very small number of duplicate damage reports, where both the facility operator and the excavator reported damages, we have left those in the root cause analysis, as each report typically lists a different root cause for the damage.

Root Cause

Examining the root cause for damage incidents provides valuable information in preventing future damage. When filing DIRT reports, we strongly encourage thoughtful determination of the actual cause. This gives everyone who evaluates DIRT reports the best opportunity to determine where improvements can be made in their organization.

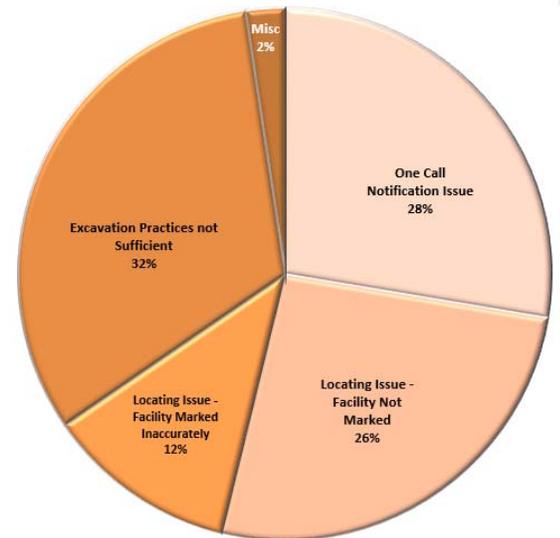
Excavation Practices dropped this quarter to 32 percent of the reports being submitted under this category, with 96 reports stating **improper excavation practices** as the reason for the damage. In addition, there were 31 reports citing the **excavator failed to maintain clearance after verifying the marks**, 22 stating that the **excavator dug prior to verifying marks by test-hole**.

One Call Notification Issue is at 28 percent of the total damages this quarter with 115 reports stating that there was **no notification made to the one-call center/811** and 20 citing that the **excavator dug after a valid ticket expired**. However, 256 of the total reports received state there was no locate request (see bottom of page). This shows that on 141 reports, the submitter chose a different root cause for the damage. Yet, without marks on the ground, excavators are digging in the blind and have a higher chance of damaging utilities or injury.

Locating Issue - Facility Not Marked is at 26 percent of the total, with 113 reports stating the damage was caused due to **locator error by not marking**. This is the highest percentage in this category since the root cause identifiers were changed in 2018.

Locating Issue - Facility Marked Inaccurately stays at 12 percent of the reports submitted with 57 listing that the facility was **marked inaccurately due to locator error**.

The **Miscellaneous** category makes up the last two percent with 7 reports identifying that the **Root cause was not listed** in any of the other categories. Initially there were many more, however, after reviewing the comments in these reports, we were able to assign correct root causes that placed them in the correct category. In addition, several duplicate reports were deleted. **Submitters should always try to determine a root cause when submitting DIRT reports so, it will help identify where education and outreach efforts need to be focused.**

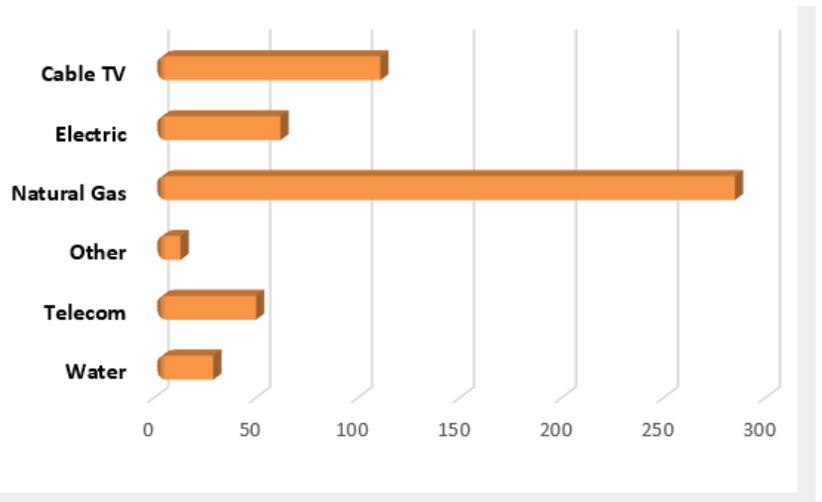


LOCATE REQUESTS FOR THE 550 REPORTS:

294 — YES a locate was requested 53%
256 — NO locate was requested 47%

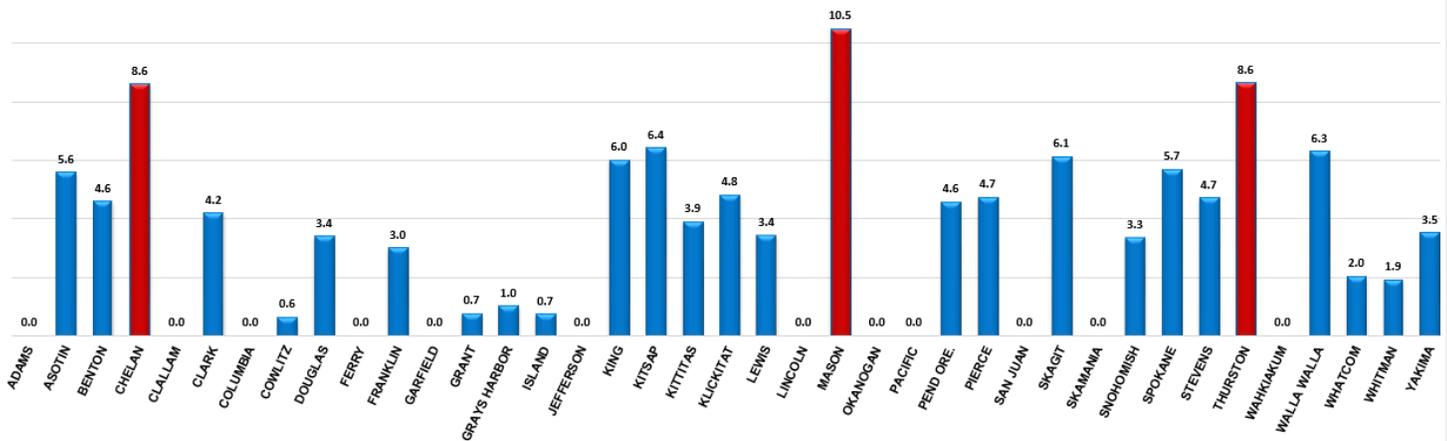
Facilities Damaged

Damage to **Natural gas** services accounted for 52 percent of the DIRT incidents received this quarter with 285 reports. **Cable TV** was cited in 20 percent of the reports with 111 damages submitted, followed by **Electric** at 11 percent or 62 reports. **Telecommunications** damages were down, reporting only 50 incidents, and **water** damages came in at 29. Additionally, there were 13 damages listed in the **Other** category. This category includes sewer and liquid pipelines.



Damage Events by County

The chart below provides a visual comparison of **damage incidents by county, per 1,000 incoming locate requests**. We continue to highlight in red the counties with more than **seven** damages per 1,000 locate requests, to help identify places that can benefit from education, advertising, or outreach. This is the lowest number of counties over that threshold since we began tracking this way. Between 2015 and 2018 the Q3 numbers were over 10, and now we only have three counties over the mark of seven damages per 1,000 incoming locate requests. Last quarter there were six, and now we only have three. Additionally, we will continue to examine reports to determine the best places to hold Dig Safe and Locator trainings and where we can focus advertising efforts. Since we held Dig Safe trainings in Spokane and Mason Counties in January of 2020, it will be interesting to see if their numbers change for the first quarter of 2020.



Education

This report was created to provide a snapshot of where damage prevention stakeholders can work together to reduce damage. By promoting the importance of calling or making an on-line locate requests, then using safe excavation practices, damages can be reduced. As we get ready to roll out more training in the fall of 2020, the data in this report will help determine best areas to focus. This report can also assist by providing information that can be used for your trainings, tail-gate meetings, and advertising. Having crucial conversations about protecting lives and infrastructure as it relates to safe underground excavation is vitally important. Please take opportunities to educate others whenever possible. We all need to continually make more people aware of the importance locates. If you have questions about this report, damage reporting, or would like to request a presentation by the commission, please contact [Lynda Holloway](#).

