Introduction
This Washington DIRT report provides a summary and analysis of submitted damage events occurring during the fourth quarter of 2016. 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 period which were submitted after 45 days will not be included in the report analysis.

Trends
A total of 432 damage reports were submitted to the DIRT database in the fourth quarter of 2016. This number is important, as it represents a 26% decrease in reports received for the same time period one year ago. Even more exciting is that locate requests increased by 11% in the fourth quarter of 2016, over the fourth quarter of 2015. As this is the second quarter in a row where damages have went down and calls for locates have increased, we have to believe this trend is due to outreach and advertising efforts by stakeholders throughout the state to promote the importance of first calling 811, and then using safe excavation practices.

Root Cause
Locating Practices Not Sufficient was identified in 34 percent of DIRT reports as causing the most damage by root cause. Facility not located or marked was identified as the main reason for damage on 61 reports, with facility marking or location closely following with 57 reports. Excavation Practices Not Sufficient accounted for 32 percent of damages this quarter, with 66 reports citing that failure to use hand tools where required caused the damage. One Call Practices Not Sufficient represents 26 percent of all damages, with 95 reports stating the root cause for the damage was due to “no notification made to one-call center.” As identified below, there were actually 182 damage reports showing “no locate request” was made, yet on 87 of those reports the person selected another root cause for damage. The Miscellaneous category initially accounted for 19 percent of damage, however, with 55 reports citing “data not collected” as a root cause, we removed those reports from this portion of the analysis. This provides a more accurate visual of the percentage of damage by root cause. This also gives a better idea of where to focus outreach and education. After removing the 55 reports, the Miscellaneous category makes up eight percent, and includes 20 damage reports which identified the root cause as “other.”

LOCATE REQUESTS FOR THE 432 DAMAGE REPORTS RECEIVED IN Q4 2016:

- YES: 250 58%
- NO: 182 42%

The information received through root causes in DIRT reporting is not intended to be used for punitive purposes. The statistics provide information about damages, which everyone can use to help make the system better and to identify needs or opportunities to develop better education and outreach.
Reporting Stakeholders
Natural gas stakeholders accounted for 261 damage reports submitted, for 60 percent of the reports received. Of those reports, 33 were related to damage to other utilities. Electric companies submitted 47 reports for 11 percent, Telecommunications companies submitted 60 reports, for 14 percent, and Public Works submitted 25 reports for six percent of the reports received, Excavators submitted 31 DIRT reports for 7 percent of the reports received. We want to continue to put emphasis on the importance of DIRT reporting to all excavators who damage facilities, per RCW 19.122.053. Submitting a damage report is also each party’s opportunity to tell their side of the story.

Damage Events by County
The chart below identifies damage events by county per 1,000 incoming locate requests. The counties that have more than 10.0 damages per 1,000 locate requests have been highlighted in red to help identify counties that may need additional outreach and or education. However, we are also aware that using this method can sometimes make damages look worse in smaller populated counties.

Education
Please take advantage of opportunities to educate others about the Call Before You Dig and safe digging practices. You can also provide the commission’s contact information to anyone who is unaware of the requirements in RCW 19.122, or in need of information about damage reporting. If your organization would like to arrange a presentation by the commission, or if you have questions about this report or damage reporting in general, contact Lynda Holloway.