



Buried Utilities

There are often deadly hazards lurking underground on excavation sites. Let's discuss how to avoid rupturing or breaking underground utilities such as electrical power cables and pipelines.

Here is an Example

A construction crew using an auger to dig a hole to anchor a support cable for a utility pole cut a small plastic gas line. Escaping gas soon reached a nearby building where it ignited about 20 minutes after the pipe was damaged. Four people died and 15 were injured. Three buildings were destroyed and more than a dozen other structures had extensive damage.

1. **Have you ever had contact with buried utilities?**
2. **Are you familiar with steps that can be taken to avoid injuring yourself when on a worksite?**

Before digging:

- Call electrical, gas and communications utilities at least 24 hours in advance.
- Look for gas lines. They should be marked with yellow paint or flags.
- Review marked out areas. They may not be exact.
- Dig by hand within 2 feet of mark-out.

When digging, look for:

- signs of previous digging
- changes in soil types
- asphalt patches or depressions
- concrete, plastic or gravel

If a line is hit, you must report it! If it's a gas line, evacuate everyone, secure the area and call the fire department.

What Are We Going to Do Today?

What will we do here at the worksite today to prevent being injured by buried utilities?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

OSHA STANDARD: 1926.651



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