

E^{the} Excavator



A newsletter published by Wisconsin's one-call center

WHITE LINING: Pre-marking Your Way to Better Communication

White lining has been a popular topic in different forums of Wisconsin damage prevention this year. OSHA made a point of encouraging white lining as part of its message at the excavator safety meetings earlier this year. It was also a topic of discussion at the most recent Wisconsin Common Ground Alliance meeting.



There's no confusing where this excavator is going to dig. White lining your jobsite will help communication with locators and help reduce dig-in damages.

But what is white lining? It's when an excavator marks out at the jobsite the scope of the proposed excavation with white paint or flags. Dig area descriptions, including marking instructions, can sometimes be vague, making the locator interpret what the contractor wants. It's another way for a contractor to communicate to the locators what should be marked. The goal is to have

the locator and the excavator on the same page when it comes to the size and location of a dig site. White lining

helps reach this goal.

It is part of the Diggers Hotline call taking procedures; every caller is asked if the dig site will be pre-marked.

The Common Ground Alliance, a national organization, goes into even further detail when defining white lining in Best Practice 5-2:

When the excavation site cannot be clearly and adequately identified on the locate ticket, the excavator designates the route and/or area to be excavated using white pre-marking prior to the arrival of the locator.

At the June Wisconsin CGA meeting, some of the benefits of white lining for both contractors and locators were discussed. From a contractor's perspective, white lining is another way to communicate clearly with a locator. More importantly, it removes any guesswork for locators, as there are fewer ways to misinterpret white marks showing the limits of an excavation compared to just using marking instructions on the Diggers Hotline ticket.

"Damages occur everyday and many of them could be prevented through the use

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Pre-marking has been identified as a Best Practice by the Common Ground Alliance



Wisconsin Common Ground Alliance Plants Tree as part of National Safe Digging Month

Wisconsin's Regional Common Ground Alliance commemorated National Safe Digging Month with a tree planting at Wilson Elementary School in West Allis, WI.



Representatives from We Energies, the City of West Allis and students at Wilson participated in the tree planting that showed the importance of using the one-call center.

The Common Ground Alliance and its stakeholders have designated each May as National Safe Digging Month. This month is dedicated to increasing awareness of safe digging practices across the country and to celebrate the anniversary of 811, the national “call-before-you-dig” number.



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of white lining,” said Joshua Rawls with Vanguard Utility Partners. “Not only can damages be reduced, but marking instructions on tickets can be understood by utility locators ensuring that your dig area is fully marked. White lining will also save the utility locator considerable time.”

Going to the jobsite to pre-mark your excavation can also serve as opportunity to do a site survey. Any indicators of private lines? Anything not look right at the job site? If you are there pre-marking, you can have the opportunity to resolve those issues before the rest of the crew shows up.

Knowing exactly where the digging is to occur can help the excavator’s crew identify where the bucket should go in the ground. White lining is also more efficient than scheduling appointment tickets with the locators. And because the locators will have a better feel for the scope of the project, the likelihood of a dig-in damage may decrease.

White lining also helps locators. Premarked sites eliminate the need to mark two miles of ditch line for five culverts or a 100-foot radius of an intersection for a single fire hydrant.

A jobsite that is pre-marked will always add to even the best explained marking instructions, which will lead to less questions by locators. And the fewer questions at jobsites for locators, means less time spent at jobsites, which means more jobsites can be marked each day. And that’s better for everyone.



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

