

WASHINGTON



UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

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

TTY
800-416-5289

Education and Outreach
360-664-1110

Media Line
360-664-1116

Damage Prevention
360-664-1118

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

PO Box 47250
1300 S Evergreen Pk Dr SW
Olympia WA 98504



Washington's Dig Law Contractor 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 does the new law take effect?

The updated version of RCW 19.122 will go into effect January 1, 2013. After that date, you will be required to follow the new requirements when you dig.

What is staying the same for contractors?

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 is changing for contractors?

There are many changes to the old law. Most importantly, contractors 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, your dig ticket expires and you will have to call for a new locate if you plan to continue with your project.

What else is changing?

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—Contractor’s Responsibilities

There has also been a **reporting requirement** added to the new law. Facility operators or contractors 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.
- Dig without calling and damage a 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.
- Dig without calling and damage a transmission pipeline, pay \$10,000 fine, triple repair costs and spend 30 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

Online locates
www.callbeforeyoudig.org

Washington 811
www.washington811.com

Common Ground Alliance
www.call811.com