

Excavator Responsibilities

The excavator plays the most important role in preventing damages to underground facilities.

The professional excavator must fully understand how the one call system works and know his responsibilities as described by law.

Safety

The primary purpose of the One Call System is to increase the level of safety for both the excavator and the general public.

The excavator who works closely around underground facilities is at great risk when he proceeds without following the necessary steps to avoid damages.

The Law.

Missouri law states that “a person shall not make or begin any excavation ... without first giving notice to the notification center”

RSMO 319.025 #1

The definition of excavation is very broad and covers all types of activity.

RSMO 319.015 #4

Legal Issues

Failure on the part of the excavator to place a locate request may result in a civil penalty of up to \$10,000 for each violation for each day such violation exist.

RSMO 319.045 #3

The Missouri Attorney General's office is presently issuing fines to both utilities and excavators who have failed meet their legal responsibilities.

More Reasons To Request a Locate

- **Legal Issues** – Lawsuits - Attorney fees
- **Downtime and Delays** – Additional cost - Less if any, profit for the excavator
- **Interruption of Services** – Vital public services may be interrupted, liability may fall on the excavator
- **Environmental Issues** – DNR and EPA fines
- **Insurance Cost** – Increased premiums

Less than 1% of underground excavations that are preceded by a locate request result in damages.

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Placing the Locate Request

How to Contact MOCS

The Locate Request may be submitted by:

Calling **1-800-DIG-RITE**, 1-800-344-748, or **811**,
or by submitting on-line at www.mo1call.com

The call center is never closed and will process your locate request 24/7/365.

Placing the Locate Request

Who Should Contact MOCS

It is recommended that the person directly involved in the excavation place the locate request.

Having direct knowledge of the information on the locate request and the utilities notified is instrumental in reducing damages.

Do not trust someone else to place your locate request. The responsibility is yours.

Basic Information Required

Caller Information:

Caller name and phone number

Excavator Information:

Company name and address

Contact names and phone numbers, e-mail

Excavation Information:

Type of work and equipment

Who work is being done for

Trenchless - Explosives - White Lines - Depth

Dig Site Location:

County - City - City limits

Address - Intersecting Street

Placing the Locate Request Ticket Number and Utility List

The excavator should always retain the ticket number and list of utilities.

Many excavators use “Ticket Search” on the MOCS website to print out their ticket and its list of utilities for reference in the field and for their records in the office.

Placing the Locate Request

“Emergency” Definition

An Emergency is “a sudden unexpected occurrence, presenting a clear and imminent danger demanding immediate action”

An Emergency ticket is not what you call in when you haven't scheduled your work in advance.

The excavator may be billed for the cost of a false Emergency request.

Before You Dig

White Lining and Flagging

Marking the dig site with white flags or paint prior to the utilities locate is strongly recommended.

Having the site marked with white speeds up the locating process and increases the accuracy of the locate.

Before You Dig

Wait the Required Amount of Time

Missouri law allows the utilities two full working days to respond to the locate request.

The two day period begins at midnight on the day the call is made.

The best way to remember this is to allow “3 Working Days” for the utilities to respond.

Before You Dig

How soon should the work be started?

The excavator shall place the locate request at least 2 days but not more than 10 working days before commencing excavation.

RSMO 319.026.1

Before You Dig

The Approximate Location

Locating underground facilities is never an exact process.

Missouri law allows for an “Approximate Location”.

This is defined as a strip of land not wider than the width of the facility plus two feet on either side.

Hand digging to expose the facilities within the “Approximate Location” is recommended.

Before You Dig

Document the Locates

It is to the excavators advantage to document the marks at the dig site before starting any work.

Take several photographs of the marks from different angles, showing measurements and landmarks.

Having documentation is important if the utilities were mismarked and damages occur.

Before You Dig

Marking Standards

Fully understand what the marks mean.

Missouri One Call recommends an amended version of the national marking standards developed by the Common Ground Alliance.

These marking standards may be viewed in the MOCS Excavator Manual.

Before You Dig

Confirm Utility Response

Before proceeding with any excavation, the response of the utilities to your locate request must be confirmed.

This is the core reason why you place a locate request.

Compare the list of utilities generated by your locate request with the marks at the dig site and the “Clear” notifications you have received before beginning your work.

Confirming utility response is essential to the process and essential to prevent damages. Simply having a ticket number before proceeding is not enough.

No Responses

After confirming utility response, if the excavator has determined that one or more utilities have not responded, the he is required to submit a “No Response” ticket.

The utilities have 2 hours to respond to the “No Response” notification.

After Starting Your Work

Remark Notifications

When markings have been provided, the excavator may commence or continue to work within the area described in the notice as long as the markings are visible.

If marks become unusable, the excavator must make a “Remark” request to have the area remarked.

Utilities have 2 working days to respond to this request.

RSMO 319.026.6

After Starting Your Work

Respect and Protect the Marks

The excavator should always make an effort to protect the marks at the dig site.

The utilities may bill the excavator for the cost of remarking if he has failed to exercise reasonable care in protecting the marks.

After Starting Your Work

Safe Digging Practices

Potholing is used to confirm the height, size and depth of the underground facility. You should always pothole when digging within the “Approximate Location” of the marks, when directional drilling or when crossing a marked facility.

“**Careful and prudent**” is the word phrase used throughout the law to describe the how the excavator is expected to conduct his excavation.

After Starting Your Work

Directional Drilling

Missouri law states that when directional drilling the excavator shall make careful and prudent efforts to:

1. Confirm the horizontal and vertical location of a facility before boring across or paralleling in the marked “Approximate Location” of the facility.
2. Confirm the horizontal and vertical location of the boring device during boring operations.

RSMO 319.037

“Dig Up” Notifications

If damage, dislocation or disturbance of any underground facility occurs during excavation the excavator is required by law to immediately notify the call center.

Reference the previous ticket number. All utilities on that ticket will be notified. Utilities not involved in the damage are not required to respond.

It is illegal to attempt to conceal or to repair a damaged utility.

RSMO 319.045

Why Damages Occur

Excavation Practices Not Sufficient	41%
Notification Not Made	27%
Notification Practices Not sufficient	22%
Miscellaneous	10%

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Gas Damage

If a pipeline or natural gas line is damaged or the odor of gas is present:

1. Safely remove yourself and others from the area.
Turn off equipment and move upwind if possible.
2. Call 911 emergency responders.
3. Call 1-800 DIG-RITE or 811 and do a “Dig Up’ ticket.
4. Call the Gas Company
5. Do no allow anyone to approach the dig site.
6. Do no attempt to operate valves on the pipeline or gas line.
7. If ignition has occurred, do not try to extinguish the flame.

Design Tickets

In the initial stages of designing a project, determining what facilities are located at the dig site can greatly reduce the chances of damages.

Both time and money can be saved for all parties involved if the “Design” ticket is utilized.

MOCS offers two types of Design tickets.

1. “**Preliminary Design**” - You can request a list of utilities and contact phone numbers in the project site.
2. “**Design**” - You can request an actual locate of the utilities at the project site.

Ticket Types

- **Preliminary Design** – To be requested to determine what facilities are present when planning a project. Contact names and numbers will be supplied. No markings will be made.
- **Design** – To be requested when planning a project. Will generate actual markings at the dig site. Utilities are allowed 5 working days to respond. Excavation cannot take place on a design ticket. A routine locate request must be placed before beginning work.
- **Routine** – a regular locate request
- **No Response** – To be requested when one or more of the utilities fail to respond the original locate request.

Ticket Types

- **Emergency** – Only to be used when the situation meets the legal definition.
- **Dig Up** – Excavator legally required to only notify MOCS when damage to facilities has occurred. If damage to a pipeline or natural gas facilities, both 911 and the affected utility must be notified.
- **Renewal** – To be used when previous marks are not visible and need to be remarked due to weather, construction or work not starting.

Summary

1. Always place your locate request.
2. Allow the required amount of time for the utilities to respond.
3. Begin your work within the 2 to 10 day window.
4. White flag the dig site.
5. Document the marks.
6. Always confirm utility response before digging.
7. Request a No Response or Renewal if needed.
8. Pothole to verify facility location.
9. Excavate in a careful and prudent manner.

Summary

Your Missouri One Call System serves all the stakeholders involved in the process of preventing damages.

Everyone involved, the utilities, the MOCS call center and the excavators have a shared responsibility in making this damage prevention system work.

MOCS processes thousands of locate request a day. Every day, thousands of excavators are able to do their work without causing damages.

In almost every case, when damages occur, someone failed to do their part in the system.