

MOCGA Toolbox Talk

Utility Locator Safety



SAFETY TIPS

WHY DO INJURIES HAPPEN?

- Fatigue
- Distractions like phones
- Daydreaming or stress
- Being in a hurry
- Taking shortcuts
- Not following safety rules or procedures
- Carelessness
- Apathy, low self-worth and depression

BE PROUD OF YOUR WORK!

- Locating is physically demanding, and can result in long work days.
- Locating is a unique field of work that helps protect lives and property.
- Be proud of safety. Do you value your quality of life, or the quality of life your family enjoys?
- Safety takes conscious effort and awareness.
- Locators must MAKE SAFETY HAPPEN. In an uncontrolled work environment like field work, hazards cannot always be controlled.
- Safety ensures you will get home safely. Who can argue with that?

TOTAL SAFETY PHILOSOPHY

- Be safe at home: Protect your family members and be a safety leader to your children and family.
- Stay healthy: Hydration, flexibility and a healthy diet will help ward off orthopedic, overuse or overexertion injuries.
- Safety at work: Follow safety rules, be on the defensive, wear your gear and stay aware!

Introduction: Locators drive and walk many miles each day. Some locators can walk up to 6 miles on a busy day! There are many hazards encountered during a routine day of work including bugs, dogs, traffic and confused property landowners. Good health, flexibility, rest and awareness combined will help keep locators safe. This document is a quick safety review for field utility locating crews.

LOCATORS MUST KNOW OSHA's "FOCUS FOUR" JOBSITE HAZARDS:

1. Falls: These include employee falls from elevation, machines or leading edges.
2. Electrocution hazards: These include striking underground and overhead electrical lines, as well as contact with energized electrical system components.
3. Struck-by hazards: These include track hoe swing radius, moving traffic and back-over injuries.
4. Caught-in-or-between hazards: These include falling objects, moving machine pinch-points and tipping materials.

LOCATOR FIELD SAFETY TIPS

- Know your company's safety policies and expectations.
- When driving or riding in company vehicles, always wear your seat belt.
- Minimize distractions like cell phone use or texting.
- Plan the safest driving route to the jobsite.
- Avoid parking in traffic. If possible, move your vehicle off of the road.
- Wear your safety gear. This includes safety footwear, long pants, high-visibility vest, eye protection and gloves.
- Keep your eyes on your path. Scan walking and working surfaces as you go. Do your best to identify and react to slip, trip and fall hazards.
- Do not enter confined spaces unless you're prepared. Complete an entry permit, test the atmosphere, ventilate and prepare for a possible emergency or rescue.

These advisory materials have been developed from national standards and sources believed to be reliable, however, no guarantee is made as to the sufficiency of the information contained in the material and the Missouri Common Ground Alliance assumes no liability for its use. Advice about specific situations should be obtained from a qualified safety professional.

