



BC ONE CALL makes it easy to ‘call before you dig’

Don Nelson,

Industry Services Manager, Construction

Workers' Compensation Board

Many workers and contractors are unaware of the consequences of damaging buried facilities such as pipelines, telecommunications cables, water and sewage lines and electrical wires.

If you are found to be responsible for causing damage to an underground facility you may be liable for all costs resulting from flooding, fire, loss of business and environmental damage. You could even be held criminally liable for any injury or loss of life. BC ONE CALL program is a free service that allows contractors to receive detailed information about the location of any underground facility within two working days.

BC ONE CALL is a province-wide non-profit organization providing one toll-free number, **1-800-474-6886**, to call before digging. Telus Mobility and Rogers offer free airtime to cellular callers (dial *6886). By calling BC ONE CALL you can reduce the risk of personal injury and property damage, as well as minimize risks associated with accidents involving buried facilities. Typical users include equipment operators, contractors, home builders, developers and landscapers, as well as federal, provincial and municipal departments.

The Workers' Compensation Board of B.C. supports the work of BC ONE CALL and has produced a short video to encourage 'calling before you dig'. The video demonstrates the consequences of not calling and explains what happens when a person calls, including how the various utilities respond to the call.

Users of BC ONE CALL benefit from the convenience of having only one number to call before digging. BC ONE CALL advises callers of the member companies with buried facilities in the area of the proposed excavation and then alerts member companies of the digging request. Members call the excavator to advise of the whereabouts of the buried facilities in their area.

Until every owner and operator of buried facilities in British Columbia is a member of BC ONE CALL, excavators must determine and notify any non-member companies that may have facilities in the area.

“WCB has really helped raise awareness of calling before you dig,” says Scott Henley, General Manager of BC ONE CALL. “They help distribute our pamphlets and their safety officers work with us in ensuring that excavators know the importance of BC ONE CALL.”

Henley is also enthusiastic about the new video WCB has funded. “It will be used in excavator safety seminars done by WCB officers, by BC ONE CALL and by our member organizations,” he says. The video will also be distributed to municipalities across the province.

BC ONE CALL receives about 3,000 to 4,000 calls each month, a number that has grown every year since its inception six years ago. “Several of our member organizations have been able to statistically show damage reduction to their buried facilities since starting with BC ONE CALL,” says Henley.

For more information on preventing injuries in construction, visit our Construction Health and Safety Centre at <http://construction.healthandsafetycentre.org>.

SEND US YOUR IDEAS AND QUESTIONS

I would like to include your ideas and questions in future columns. Send your ideas for future columns to me at dnelson@wcb.bc.ca or call me at (604) 231-8631 or toll free in B.C. at 1 888 621-7233.