

Pre-Excavation Private Utility Locate Checklist

Use this checklist to organize the information, site access, and field decisions your team needs before excavation begins. It complements, but does not replace, the applicable one-call notification process for your project and location.

Download the checklist:

<https://www.safelinesubsurface.com/downloads/safeline-pre-excavation-private-utility-locate-checklist.pdf>

Call the appropriate one-call center before digging. For Virginia projects, use VA811.

Requirements vary by state and project. This checklist is a planning aid, not legal advice.

Read what 811 does not mark:

<https://www.safelinesubsurface.com/private-locating-vs-811>

Before you schedule the work

- ☐ Confirm the project address and the exact area where excavation or ground disturbance is planned.
- ☐ Write down the planned work, including the excavation purpose, approximate limits, and planned start date.
- ☐ Identify the project contact, site owner or manager, excavator, and anyone who needs the findings.
- ☐ Note the planned excavation method and approximate depth when known.
- ☐ Mark the proposed work area with white paint or another accepted method when required or appropriate for the project and jurisdiction.

Request the required public utility marks

- ☐ Contact the appropriate one-call center for the project location before excavation.
- ☐ Provide the site address, work limits, planned start information, contact details, and any other requested ticket information.
- ☐ Record the ticket number and the date and time of the request.
- ☐ Allow the required marking time and confirm the applicable utility operators have responded before digging.
- ☐ Walk the site and compare the public utility marks with the planned work area.
- ☐ Treat the one-call ticket and public marks as one part of the site review.

Private lines may require a separate investigation.

Identify private utilities and gather records

- ☐ List private lines or site infrastructure that may extend beyond a meter, point of consumption, or public utility scope.
- ☐ Check for service lines to detached structures, site lighting, irrigation, private water or sewer connections, communications, and other project-specific infrastructure.
- ☐ Gather available site plans, as-built drawings, prior locate records, utility maps, permits, and facility records.
- ☐ Note visible meters, valves, cleanouts, pedestals, vaults, utility rooms, risers, and other access points.
- ☐ Mark any known previous excavation, repair, installation, or abandoned-line areas for discussion during the site review.

Prepare the site for the investigation

- [] Confirm that the investigation area is accessible and identify gates, locked areas, escorts, and safety restrictions.
- [] Clear avoidable vegetation, stored materials, vehicles, and other obstructions from the planned work area.
- [] Identify surfaces or conditions that may limit access, scanning, marking, or interpretation.
- [] Arrange for a project representative who can answer questions about the planned work and available records.
- [] Tell the locator which project decision the investigation needs to support.

Plan the private locate methods and deliverables

- [] Ask which conductive utilities can be investigated with electromagnetic (EM) locating equipment.
- [] Ask where Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) may add evidence for non-metallic utilities or other subsurface anomalies.
- [] Share known utility materials, tracer-wire information, access points, and areas of concern.
- [] Confirm the investigation limits, marking approach, documentation format, and any mapping or file requirements.
- [] Confirm how uncertainty, site conditions, and findings that need additional verification will be documented.
- [] Remember that field findings are interpreted evidence affected by site conditions. Do not treat any mark or depth as a guaranteed exact location.

See SafeLine's investigation process: <https://www.safelinesubsurface.com/process>

Review marks and documentation before excavation

- [] Review the field markings, flags, paint, photos, and notes with the project team.
- [] Compare the findings with available plans, records, one-call marks, and the planned excavation limits.
- [] Photograph the work area and markings before excavation when appropriate for the project record.
- [] Record conflicts, gaps, access limitations, and areas that need clarification or verification.
- [] Share the final findings and applicable safety requirements with the excavation crew.
- [] Revisit the locate if the work area, scope, design, or excavation method changes.

Review utility mapping and documentation:

<https://www.safelinesubsurface.com/services/utility-mapping-documentation>

Final handoff before excavation

[] Confirm that the required one-call process is complete for the current project scope and timing.

[] Confirm that private utility investigation needs have been addressed for the defined work area.

[] Retain the ticket information, field photos, markings record, maps, notes, and other project documentation.

[] Stop and resolve conflicting or unclear information before excavation proceeds.

Need help preparing your project?

SafeLine Subsurface can discuss the project area, private utility questions, field investigation needs, and documentation requirements. Learn more about our private utility locating service at

<https://www.safelinesubsurface.com/services/private-utility-locating>, use the contact form to plan a subsurface investigation at <https://www.safelinesubsurface.com/contact>, or call 866-677-2335.