Underground Utility Strikes Stats and Facts

FACTS

CAUSES OF UNDERGROUND STRIKES

1. Inadequate excavation procedures (Inattention/lack of awareness, Not following procedure, No protective systems, Clearance not maintained, Misuse of tools/equipment, Lack of supervision, Service markup not maintained,)
2. Insufficient survey practices (Insufficient survey practices (use of locating equipment), Inadequate survey)
3. Inaccurate and missing underground utility location information inaccurate plans, Assets not on relevant plans.
4. Inadequate work planning (Inadequate assessment of works, Insufficient time allowed)
5. Insufficient skills (Insufficient competency, Insufficient gang skills)

- Failure to notify prior to digging (quantified as either failure to call or an incorrect/incomplete request submission) is the biggest individual factor contributing to damages.
- U.S. and the U.K. statistics reveal that a quarter of underground utility damage is attributable to locating issues including inaccurate maps, missing data and problems with underground locating equipment.

STATS

- 63 % of utility strikes occur because the excavation practices or locating practices were insufficient. Despite implementing industry-leading standards for avoiding underground utility strikes, hitting utilities on our jobsites.
- In 2017, U.S. and Canadian contractors and others on excavation job sites experienced work interruptions, struck utility lines or had a “near miss” with underground lines on a job site more than 400,000 times total. More than 316,000 of those utility strikes damaged either the utility lines themselves, excavating equipment on the job site or both.
- Of the damage included in the most recent Common Ground Alliance Damage Information Reporting Tool report for 2017, 52% were the result of “insufficient excavation practices.” Almost one-fourth of all utility strikes CGA reported were the direct result of the contractor or excavator operator failing to notify the nearest one-call center that designates the location of subsurface water, gas and electric lines prior to excavating.

- Underground utility damage is unfortunately common, as over 450,000 damage incidents were reported in 2019, according to the Common Ground Alliance (CGA)’s annual report.