

IOWA 811

ONE CALLSM

The Official Newsletter of Iowa One Call

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Excavator

QUARTERLY

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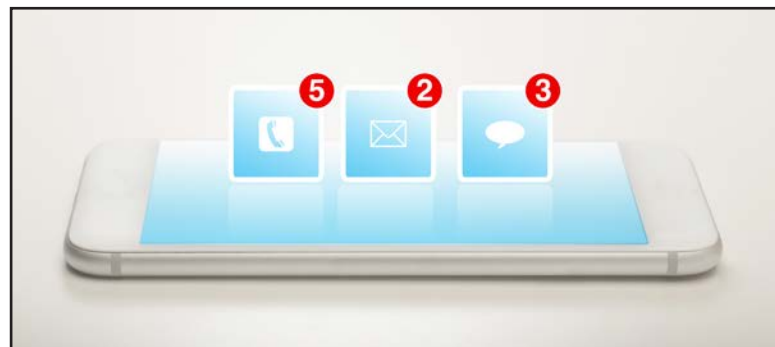
WHAT'S UP BELOW



MAINTAINING DIRECT COMMUNICATION

In the world of underground facility damage prevention, communication is key. It's the lifeline that keeps excavators and locators in sync, ensuring excavation projects proceed smoothly and safely. While technology has made it easier than ever to exchange information, there's no substitute for direct communication between locators and excavators. The importance of locators contacting excavators directly cannot be overstated. Excavators always being ready to answer their phones during all excavation projects is equally important.

One of the major "asks" excavators have of locators is also a component of the law. Excavators want locators to contact them directly whenever there may be extenuating circumstances that could prevent the locating and marking from being completed on time. With the electronic positive response system (EPRS) that was put in place after legislative amendments in 2014, it may be tempting for locators to rely solely on the automated EPRS for communication. However, direct communication between locators and excavators is an important necessity that should never be overlooked – personal interaction can help clarify any doubts, address specific concerns, and ensure that everyone is on the same page.



When Direct Communication Is Required

Per Iowa Code, there are only two statutory exceptions that impact the 48-hour requirement: 1) when an emergency exists, as defined in Iowa code chapter 480, and 2) when an operator and excavator have mutually agreed to an alternative marking schedule.

During an emergency "where there is clear and immediate danger to life or health, or essential services, or a potentially significant loss of property," an excavator may begin excavating immediately without providing a 48-hour notice, provided the excavator takes reasonable precautions to protect the underground facilities and notifies Iowa One Call of the excavation as soon as practical (e.g., immediately upon alleviating the emergency).

Upon receiving a locate notice from Iowa One Call, an operator must complete the locating and marking for that notice (ticket) within 48 hours after receiving the notice, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays unless otherwise agreed by the operator and the excavator. It is this subsection in the code – "unless otherwise agreed by the operator and the excavator" – that requires two-way communication between both the operator and the excavator to establish a mutually agreed upon alternative to the required 48-hour period. In fact, an "agreed-to-marking-schedule" status via the EPRS alone (without mutual confirmation from the excavator) does not constitute a valid agreement, and the forty-eight-hour required time period would stand. This is why it is so important that locators contact excavators directly to obtain the excavator's agreement before using the EPRS to status an alternative marking schedule. Additionally, any status entered in the EPRS other than "marked" and "clear" used by a locator as a means to delay the locating and marking would require the locator to coordinate any necessary arrangements or agreement with the excavator via two-way communication.

Two-way communication between locators and excavators can be established in various ways, but a direct phone call is the best way to expediate the process. Communicating via email, text, and/or voice messaging can result in mutual dialog and consent, but only when all parties have responded/replied to the email, text, or voice-message. Merely sending an electronic message or leaving a voice message does not constitute two-way communication.

Excavators: Answer That Call

While locators play a crucial role in initiating contact, excavators must reciprocate by answering their phones promptly during any excavation. A key requirement of the law in Iowa is that excavators must provide a valid telephone number on all notices to Iowa One Call. This telephone number is crucial because it allows operators/locators to contact the excavator if they have questions or need additional information about the proposed excavation. It also helps ensure that necessary communication can occur between locators and excavators, allowing for information to be exchanged in real time. Construction/excavation sites are typically dynamic environments, and they always have the potential for unexpected challenges and changes. Direct communication via a telephone enables real-time adjustments that can be instrumental to ensuring efficient work schedules without compromising safety.

Failure by an excavator to answer the designated telephone number can severely impede the required communication process. Excavators must understand that underground facility operators have a critical responsibility in operating and maintaining their vital underground infrastructure. All Iowans, including excavators, locators, homeowners, business owners, businesses and industry, rely on the essential services provided via underground facilities. Underground facility operators have oversight of their underground facilities and the authority to require excavators to hand dig within the 18-inch tolerance zone. Operators may also require excavators to meet the operator/operator representative at the proposed excavation site for a “standby” in advance of or during the excavation. It is extremely important that operators/locators are able to contact excavators at all times during an excavation.

Locators: Be Persistent

Locators trying to contact excavators should be persistent if an excavator fails to answer their telephone. Even though excavators are expected to answer the designated telephone number at all times during an excavation, there may be times when the excavator is unable to answer immediately. While locators should leave voice messages, they shouldn't rely on voice messaging when direct two-way communication in real-time is optimal. Locators should make additional attempts to contact an excavator if the locator's first attempt goes unanswered. Additionally, locators must understand that an agreement between the locator and an excavator cannot be established unless the excavator responds to the locator's request. Unfortunately for locators, failure by an excavator to answer their designated telephone number may impede the locator's attempt to establish a mutual agreement – i.e., the required forty-eight-hour period would stand.

By maintaining effective two-way communication, utilizing the electronic positive response system (EPRS), making phone calls, and collaborating on projects, excavators and locators can help mitigate downtime in the field and maximize efficiency. While the EPRS is a valuable tool, it is intended to complement, not replace, direct communication. By actively engaging in dialogue and being responsive to calls, excavators and locators can enhance communication. Clear, effective communication is one of the most important components of damage prevention.





OUT ON THE ROAD: IOWA ONE CALL CONNECTS WITH CONTRACTORS ACROSS THE STATE

Iowa One Call is hitting the road this fall! We are excited to announce an initiative that brings us out of the office and into the field to connect with contractors all across Iowa. Our Iowa One Call truck is on the move and making stops at various contractor shops, all while advertising to the public as we travel from road to road.

Here are some of the things we plan to deliver while making stops at contractor shops across the state:



Damage hit kits – We're providing contractors with essential damage hit kits to ensure they have the tools needed to take photos and document where the original markings were in the event of a damage.



Excavator manuals – Knowledge is power! Our excavator manuals are packed with valuable information, including the Iowa One Call law (Iowa Code chapter 480) to help contractors refer to important safety laws and best practices. We'll distribute manuals at each stop.



Contact information – Need assistance or have questions about the one call process? We'll have business cards handy to be able to provide contact information for any questions or issues that might arise while in the field.



Educational and promotional materials – We'll have a variety of educational and promotional materials, such as damage prevention posters, pens, pencils, wallet cards, and more.

Additionally, we may have some delicious treats to deliver as a token of our appreciation for the hard work and dedication of Iowa's contractors.

Why are we hitting the road? The Iowa One Call administrative staff is eager to understand what's happening in the field firsthand. We want to know about challenges and successes, along with how we can help expedite solving any issues.

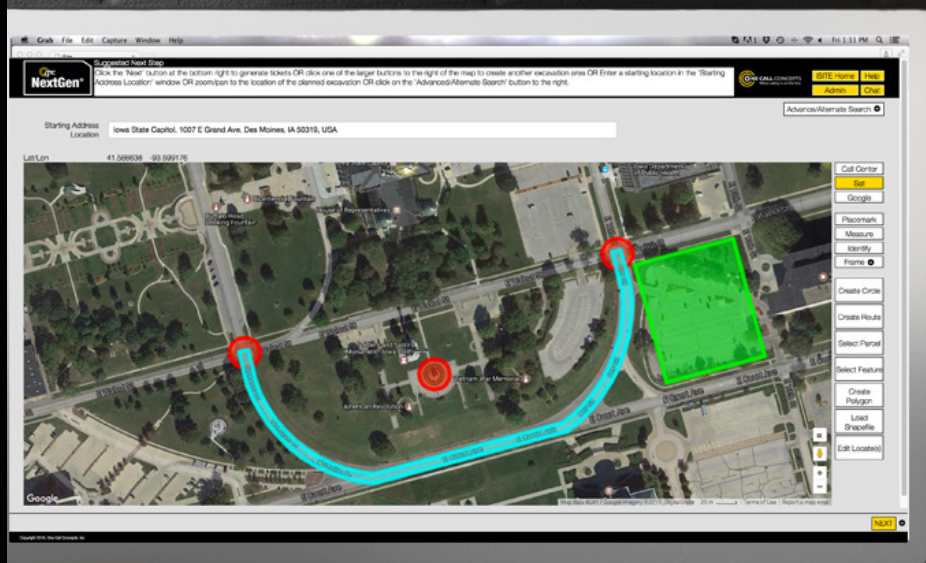
This is an excellent opportunity for the excavating community to let their voices be heard. We understand that effective communication is a two-way street. By us coming out to meet contractors in the field, we hope to establish relationships and contacts to make it easier for them to reach out to us with concerns, suggestions, and questions.

If you spot the Iowa One Call truck cruising through your town or parked outside a business, please don't hesitate to come say hello! We're here to assist excavators, homeowners, and locators in creating a safer and more efficient excavation process.



NOTE: Iowa One Call does not have any enforcement authority (enforcement for Iowa One Call is handled by the Attorney General's office), but we can listen to your individual issues and use our list of contacts that are not typically made available to the public to potentially expedite solutions for those issues. We're always here to listen and to try and assist as much as we're able to.

TIPS FOR MAPPING PRECISELY AND ACCURATELY



CHECK OUT THE NEXTGEN ONLINE TICKETING TUTORIAL [HERE!](#)

Use the right tool for the job – ITIC NextGen offers a diverse array of mapping options to fit every scenario.

2. Don't over-map – ITIC NextGen builds the locate request from the mapping. Over-mapping a work area can result in wasted time and resources.

3. Double-check your work – use the different map views and/or Google street view to help ensure you've mapped accurately and completely.



IOWA ONE CALL AND IOWA WILD: TEAMING UP TO PROMOTE SAFE DIGGING

Iowa One Call is thrilled to announce our sponsorship with the Iowa Wild hockey club in Des Moines again this year. This opportunity allows us to spread the crucial message of safe digging to thousands of homeowners and fans, along with a vital reminder to click (IowaOneCall.com) or call 8-1-1 before you dig!

“Power Play for Safe Digging”

The Iowa Wild boasts an impressive attendance of anywhere from 6,000 to 10,000+ people for each game at Wells Fargo Arena, providing a great platform to reach a large segment of homeowners. Our goal is to ensure that homeowners understand the importance of contacting 811 before any excavation or digging project begins.

If you attend an Iowa Wild game, make sure to visit the Iowa One Call table in the main concourse by the arena’s main entry doors. We’ve got a lineup of fantastic promotional items available, including squishy hockey pucks (perfect for stress relief or a friendly game of indoor hockey), water bottles, hats, pens/pencils, and more! These goodies not only show our appreciation, they also serve as a reminder to prioritize safety when tackling outdoor projects.

Official Sponsor of the Ice Crew

Iowa One Call is proud to be the official sponsor of the Iowa Wild Ice Crew. You’ll see our messaging proudly displayed on the crew’s shirts, ensuring that safe digging remains in the spotlight. Keep an eye out for our logo on their ice shovels as well. This is all part of our commitment to promoting the importance of contacting 811 and preventing underground utility damage.

Whether you’re planning a landscaping project, installing a fence, or planting a tree, always remember that clicking or calling 8-1-1 is the first step to ensure the safety of your project and our community. Teaming up with the Iowa Wild hockey club is just one of the many ways we’re working to spread our message of safe digging and damage prevention. We’re excited about the opportunity to reach homeowners and fans in a fun and engaging way.

Hooray for safe digging and go Iowa Wild!



INTRODUCING THE Safe Excavator App



State laws pertaining to excavation (or digging) vary – and finding the specific information you're looking for quickly can be a challenge.

The **Safe Excavator App** makes it easy to find state-specific excavation information including the following requirements or events:

- ▼ Advance notice or wait time
- ▼ Pre-marking ('whitelining')
- ▼ 811 ticket information
- ▼ Names of local enforcement agencies and 811 call centers, also connecting you electronically to submit a locate request
- ▼ Includes safe digging tips + checklist

PLEASE CONTACT
Lindsay Sander
713.208.0273
LNS@SanderResources.com
WITH ANY QUESTIONS.



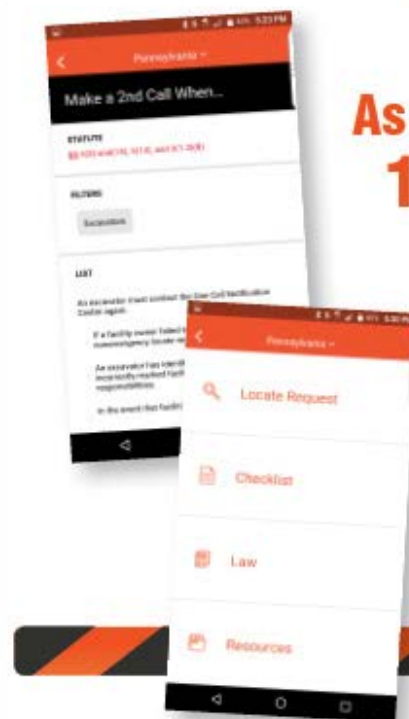
FREE to download in the App store (Apple) and Google Play (Android)

Search "safe excavator" or "safeexcavator" and look for the orange shovel



As simple as...
1...2...3!

- 1 Select a state
- 2 Pick an activity
- 3 Research your topic



www.safeexcavator.com



Know what's below.
811 before you dig.

The National Excavator Initiative is an effort to raise the awareness of a critically important program: 811.

Contacting 811 before digging is the single most critical action an excavator can take to help ensure their health and safety are protected, while at the same time preventing financial harm and environmental impact.



IOWA ONE CALL AT THE 2023 OCC USERS' GROUP MEETING

Iowa One Call recently attended the 2023 Users' Group meeting hosted by our call center vendor, One Call Concepts (OCC). Damage prevention professionals and industry leaders gather from across the nation for this annual event to share their knowledge, insights, and experiences. Attendees represent a diverse range of stakeholders, including board members, executive directors, and other influential figures from one call centers like Iowa One Call. Overall, the Users' Group meeting serves as a testament to the power of collaboration and shared knowledge in the safe digging field, and the collective expertise always proves to be insightful in shaping the future of damage prevention.

This year's Users' Group meeting took place in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and one of the most prominent issues discussed was locating delays – an ongoing challenge faced by most of the attending states (Iowa included). Locating delays can result in project setbacks, increased risks, and added costs. It's an issue that requires ongoing attention and innovative solutions. Iowa One Call is aware of locating delays experienced by contractors throughout the state and understands the significance of addressing them. Iowa One Call is always looking for ways to help mitigate these delays, including implementing new programs and system updates. One of the initiatives that has been recently implemented is the "Dynamic Start Time" option that allows excavators to modify/push-back their start times to – in theory – give locators more leeway and flexibility in their schedule. This flexibility has the potential to reduce overall delays, although we understand that delays are still occurring for some excavators that opt to use the Dynamic Start Time.



The Iowa One Call team at the 2023 OCC Users' Group Meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico

Additionally, there will be a new modification to the re-locate system that could potentially save excavators time on their locates. This will be rolled out for the next dig season in 2024.

The knowledge gained and relationships built at Users' Group benefits Iowa One Call and, by extension, the entire Iowa community. Remember – safe digging is a shared responsibility. By working together, we can continue to protect our valuable underground infrastructure while promoting efficiency and safety in all excavation projects. Stay tuned for more updates from Iowa One Call, and always remember to click (IowaOneCall.com) or call 8-1-1 before you dig. Together, we can dig safely and protect what matters most.



IN THE NEWS



Local Excavation and Safety News From Around the Web



This Is Iowa: 92-year-old retired farmer grows vegetables for his community

www.kcci.com

Dick Naeve might be a retired farmer, but his work is far from over. When he was in his 70s, the 92-year-old Humboldt resident got an order from his doctor: keep gardening. But Naeve doesn't just garden to stay active; he also gardens to connect with his community. When his produce is ready to pick, he delivers it to Humboldt residents across generations, and he doesn't ask for a dime... [\[Watch the Video\]](#)

Thursday sessions give public a chance to hear plan for regional Central Iowa Water Works

www.desmoinesregister.com

Central Iowa drinking water suppliers are preparing to make their case to the public as they move toward the creation of a regional water system they say would allow them to pool their resources to ensure "safe, sufficient, reliable and reasonably priced drinking water."

Des Moines Water Works, Urbandale Water Utility and West Des Moines Water Works have released the third and final draft of an agreement that, if approved, would form Central Iowa Water Works... [\[Learn More\]](#)

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