



Call Before You Dig – 343-1111

Are You Planning to Dig?

Today we bury many of our power lines to keep them out of the way and out of sight. These cables are not always marked. When putting in fence posts, party tents, children's inflatable activity centres, planting a tree, excavating for a pool, deck, etc. think about what services might be buried in the ground. Even if your power lines are overhead, you should still call. There may be other types of buried lines including street lighting.

Buried privately owned lines may also be present on the worksite (residential or commercial). Examples of privately owned lines are cables from one's house to a garage or shed to power lighting or, secondary cables from transformers to a commercial building on private property. These privately owned lines will not be located by Thunder Bay Hydro personnel and we recommend that private locates arranged between a private locator and the homeowner.

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Our locates department will come to your home or worksite and identify where Thunder Bay Hydro electricity lines are buried. This service is free to our customers and can be scheduled with as little as three days' notice of when the home excavation is going to take place. Contact other utilities to obtain the necessary clearances.

Information that will be requested

When you call Thunder Bay Hydro Locates Department, they will ask you for information. Have the following information ready before you call:

- Your name and telephone number
- An alternate name and telephone number of someone else who knows about your project
- The date when digging will start
- What type of work are you planning to do, including the scope and geographic area of the work
- Address or location of the worksite
- Any special instructions you wish to give for the utility companies that will be marking your site

What is at risk?

Remember to call before you dig as damaging underground services can have serious consequences:

- Serious life threatening personal injury
- Loss of essential services, creating a safety risk for others
- Expensive restoration costs and potential legal actions

There is no such thing as minor damage to utilities

What looks like a small nick in a gas, sewer, electricity, or water line can result in a major health and fire hazard to the surrounding neighborhood. Damaged phone lines or fiber optic cables can disrupt 911 emergency services. All utilities have a locate department and we encourage homeowners and contractors to call and obtain clearances before digging.

Before using power-digging tools, hand dig

The locator will tell you the location of underground utilities, but not their depth. The depth of where lines are buried varies especially due to passage of time, improper installation, landscaping, re-grading, repaving, erosion, and building development.

Before you can safely cross or work close to an underground utility, you must first verify its depth. Flags and locator marks tell you the direction the utility is running, but not how deeply it is buried. The only way to be sure of utility depth is to carefully expose it and see for yourself.

Before using any power tools, hand dig to verify exact utility depth. Any time you suspect unmarked hazards, hand dig the area carefully to test your suspicions. If you are uncertain, call us and wait for a response.

Appropriate Hand Digging Tools

Proper hand-digging tools and techniques will protect both you and the utility: Use a blunt-nosed shovel to loosen the soil, and a regular shovel to remove it. Do not use a pickax or a pointed spade. Do not stab at the soil or stomp on the shovel with both feet.

Work with a gentle prying action and dig at an angle, so the shovel will slide along the surface of the wire, conduit, or pipe. Alternatively, dig to the depth where you expect the utility to be, but off to the side. Then use a prying motion to break away soil as you approach the utility laterally.

Backfill the soil gently to avoid damaging any utilities.

Never bury a damaged utility

Trying to cover up an accident can be dangerous, and can lead to costly damages (personal and financial) or charges under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

Tolerance Zones

When digging near the "tolerance zone" (one metre each side of the locate line), use hand tools consistent with the parameters above regarding appropriate tools.

At any point, if you are hesitant, please call our locates department (343-1111).

Did You Know...

You might arrive at a job site and find no markers, even AFTER utility locating has been completed. In this case, do not assume that the area is clear of utilities. Someone may have pulled up the flags or rubbed out the markings. Check for indicators that buried utilities may be present, such as electric boxes, transformers, and gas and electric meters. Contact your utility locator service for assistance before starting work.

In case of electrical contact:

Call 911 and call us at 343-1111. Warn co-workers to stay away.

Do NOT touch the equipment and the ground at the same time.

Stay on the equipment unless it is on fire.

If you must exit the equipment, jump clean and land with your feet together.

Shuffle away with feet together on the ground. Shuffling reduces the risk of electric shock.