

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

An Act to amend and reenact § 56-265.19 of the Code of Virginia, relating to underground utility line damage prevention; abandoned lines.

[H 2053]

Approved

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 56-265.19 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 56-265.19. Duties of operator; regulations.

A. If a proposed excavation or demolition is planned in such proximity to the underground utility line that the utility line may be destroyed, damaged, dislocated, or disturbed, the operator shall mark the approximate horizontal location of the underground utility line on the ground to within two feet of either side of the underground utility line by means of stakes, paint, flags, or a combination thereof. The operator shall mark the underground utility line and report the marking status to the excavator-operator information exchange system by no later than 7:00 a.m. on the third working day following the excavator's notice to the notification center, unless the operator is unable to do so due to extraordinary circumstances. If the operator is unable to mark the location within the time allowed under this section due to extraordinary circumstances, the operator shall notify directly the person who proposes to excavate or demolish and shall, in addition, notify the person of the date and time when the location will be marked. The deferral to mark for extraordinary circumstances shall be no longer than ~~ninety-six~~ 96 hours from 7:00 a.m. on the next working day following notice to the notification center, unless a longer time is otherwise agreed upon by the operator and excavator. The operator shall also inform the notification center of any deferral.

B. If a proposed excavation or demolition is not planned in such proximity to the operator's underground utility lines that the utility line may be damaged, the operator shall so report to the notification center's excavator-operator information exchange system no later than 7:00 a.m. on the third working day following the excavator's notice to the notification center.

C. An operator shall participate in all preplanning and preconstruction meetings originated by state, county or municipal authorities relating to proposed construction projects which may affect the operator's existing or future utility lines and shall cooperate in implementing decisions reached in such preplanning and preconstruction meetings.

D. Any contract locator acting on behalf of an operator and failing to perform the duties imposed by this chapter shall be subject to the liabilities in § 56-265.25 and the civil penalties in § 56-265.32.

E. Locators shall be trained in applicable locating industry standards and practices no less stringent than the National Utility Locating Contractors Association's locator training standards and practices. Each locator's training shall be documented. Such documents shall be maintained by the operator or contract locator.

F. The Commission shall be authorized to adopt regulations designating: (i) letters for each operator to be used in conjunction with marking of underground utility lines, and (ii) symbols for marking of underground utility lines, in compliance with subsection B of § 56-265.17:3. Such letter designation and marking symbols shall be in accordance with industry standards.

G. For underground utility lines abandoned after July 1, 2002, operators shall make a reasonable attempt to keep records of these abandoned utility lines, excluding service lines connected to a single-family dwelling unit. ~~Operators may provide a response to the excavator-operator information exchange system~~ When an operator has knowledge that the operator's abandoned utility lines may be present within the area of the proposed excavation, ~~the operator shall provide a response to the excavator-operator information exchange system. Such information regarding abandoned lines shall be for informational purposes only. An operator shall not be liable to any person, or subject to civil penalties, as a result of the operator's providing incorrect information regarding abandoned lines or the subsequent use of such information. The excavator-operator information exchange system may refer any person with concerns about the accuracy of information regarding abandoned lines to the appropriate operator.~~

H. An operator shall respond to an emergency notice as soon as possible but no later than three hours from the excavator's call to the notification center.

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