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**HOUSE BILL NO. 725**

Offered January 11, 2006

Prefiled January 10, 2006

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 56-265.24:1, relating to the Underground Utility Damage Prevention Act; requirements for trenchless excavation.*

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Patron—McQuigg

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Referred to Committee on Commerce and Labor

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:****1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 56-265.24:1, as follows:****§ 56-265.24:1. Requirement for trenchless excavation.**

A. Any person conducting trenchless excavation shall take all reasonable steps necessary to protect and support underground utility lines. These steps shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. The excavator shall verify whether all utility lines in the area are marked;

2. The excavator shall ensure that bore equipment stakes are installed at a safe distance, which shall not be less than 36 inches, from marked utility lines;

3. When grounding rods are used, the excavator shall ensure that they are installed at a safe distance, which shall not be less than 24 inches, from any buried utility line that has a marked or staked location;

4. The excavator shall ensure that a minimum radial clearance of 12 inches is maintained between the bore path and any underground utility lines during pullback;

5. The excavator shall not use trenchless excavation in the vicinity of any buried utility line, including lines of water and sewer systems, within the area that have not been marked or exposed;

6. Unless prohibited by other laws, ordinances, regulations, or rules, the excavator shall expose all utility lines that will be in the bore path by hand digging to establish the underground utility line's location prior to commencing bore. For a parallel type bore, unless prohibited by other laws, ordinances, regulations, or rules, the excavator shall expose the utility line by hand digging at reasonable distances, which shall not exceed 150 feet, along the bore path;

7. The excavator shall ensure the drill head locating device is functioning properly and within its specification;

8. The excavator shall visually check the drill head as it passes through potholes, entrances, and exit pits; and

9. If the depth indicated by the locating device is lower than the bottom of the pothole or pit, the excavator shall cease boring until the hole or pit can be hand excavated further to maintain a visual inspection of the drill head.

B. As used in this section, "trenchless excavation" includes horizontal directional drilling, microtunneling, augering, wet boring, and compaction techniques that utilize pneumatic or hydraulic equipment that forces a missile or piercing tool through soil.

INTRODUCED

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