

TOOLBOX TALKS

DIGGING AROUND UTILITY LINES

Toolbox Talks are designed to promote safety discussions and best practices on the jobsite. To see more Toolbox Talks, please visit cat.com/toolboxtalks.

What is used in your area to identify underground utilities? Utility color codes are one of the most common methods for identifying existing underground utilities in construction areas with the intent of protecting the utilities from damage during excavation.

You need to ensure safety above ground and underground. Here are some tips to help you stay safe when digging or trenching:

DIGGING AROUND UTILITY LINES

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- Always call your local utility companies to identify and mark lines or other hazards in the entire area where you plan to work before you dig
- Identify potential signals that underground utility lines exist (i.e., Valves, covers, etc.)
- Know the capabilities of the equipment you are using
- Perform a walk-around on the equipment to ensure it is ready and safe for use
- Plan your tasks before you begin and have an emergency plan in case a utility line is damaged
- Know the job – Use a trench shield that is large enough for the job but light enough to be handled by the equipment you are using

SAFETY FIRST:

- Use trench shields during trenching operations
- Always install all the spreaders and NEVER remove spreaders from a shield
- Do not store materials close to the sides of a trench
- Be sure to provide a means of access and egress in and out of the trench
- Always wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Know the identification method used for underground utilities

SAMPLE OF UTILITY LINE COLOR CODES:

- Always validate the color code or the identification method meaning. The following are only intended as examples.

- White** = Proposed Excavation
- Pink** = Temporary Survey Markings
- Red** = Electric power lines, Cables, Conduit and Lighting Cables
- Yellow** = Gas, Oil, Steam, Petroleum or Gaseous Materials
- Orange** = Communication, Alarm or Signal Lines, Cables or Conduit
- Blue** = Potable Water
- Purple** = Reclaimed Water, Irrigation and Slurry Lines
- Green** = Sewers and Drain Lines

QUESTIONS TO GENERATE DISCUSSION:

- Have the underground utilities been identified? If so, how? If not, when will you?
- Do you have a plan? Do you know all the hazards associated with your task?
- What will you do if an underground utility line is damaged?

There are a lot of moving parts on the jobsite. To find a safety topic relevant to your operation, please visit cat.com/toolboxtalks.

Discussion Date:

Employee Participants:

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