

Safety Newsletter

June 2012

This Month's Topic: Underground Service Alert (USA) Tickets

USA North provides a free and effective Damage Prevention Service that protects the communities and underground facilities in Central and Northern California, and Nevada. Their role is to receive planned excavation reports from public or private excavators and to transmit those reports to all participating members of USA North who may have facilities at that excavation site so that they may notify the excavators of existing facilities in the area. It is of vital importance that all planned excavations be reported to the USA as damage caused by digging can result in litigation, fines, loss of client trust, and may even create an explosion hazard, endangering persons and property.

For this reason, all personnel involved in digging or drilling are required to review **PG&E Utility Standard S4412** and **PG&E Utility Procedure TD-4412P-03**.

Once you are familiar with these standards, you are ready to contact USA.

Preparation

Before contacting USA North, mark the perimeter of your planned dig area with a white, non-permanent substance, or clear boundary markers. Drilling work counts as dig work. If you or your team has been asked to perform work on any drill or dig site and you were not directly involved in the USA ticket creation, ask the project manager or person assigning the job for proof of ticket creation and ensure the ticket remains active until the job is complete.

California law requires anyone doing excavation work to notify utilities at least two working days before digging. Requests will be accepted as early as 14 days in advance of an excavation.

Creating a USA ticket

Online: A tutorial of the full ticket creation process can be found at USANorth.org/video.html Here are the important points:

- ✓ The Foreman field must be filled, despite not being marked as necessary.
- ✓ Use the prefix and type (Ave., St., Blvd., etc.) boxes when entering addresses.
- ✓ Locate Where: where is the work area in relation to the address?
- ✓ If you have no address or are working a complex path, describe the area in full in the Locate Where box.

Over the phone: Anyone can call USA from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, except for holidays. The number is: 811 or 1-800-227-2600.

On the site

Once the ticket is received, USA North members will either mark the path or provide you with information about the location of their underground facilities. You may not begin digging until responses have been received from all members on the ticket. You are also required to notify USA north immediately if any markings are no longer reasonably visible.

Closing out

Tickets are only valid for 28 days. Make sure that all markings, equipment, and other obstructions are cleared before your ticket's expiration date. You must request an extension if work will continue beyond that time. To extend your ticket online, log into the USA North E-Ticket site, navigate to Ticket Summary and click Extend/Renew. A ticket can be extended up to a maximum of six months, after which it must be renewed. Renewing an expired ticket works the same way, but you will be asked for additional information. Any major change will require a new ticket.

"The Unknowns are out there. By that I mean the unknown facilities that are underground. That's what the USA tickets are all about. If you don't call in, then the Unknowns are out there. You might hit something you aren't prepared for. We're talking about power lines, gas mains, all kinds of dangerous objects. So call in so you know what you're getting into."

-Trini Sandoval, Alisto Construction Manager



PG&E offers these tips for a safe excavation:

- If you believe a utility has not marked its lines, call 811 again to notify USA.
- To help utilities, mark the proposed excavation area on paved surfaces with white chalk-based paint. Homeowners can also use other white substances, such as sugar or flour. On unpaved surfaces, use flags or stakes to mark the proposed excavation area.
- Carefully hand-excavate within 24 inches on either side of a utility-marked facility.
- Be careful not to erase facility marks while working. If you cannot see the markings, call 811 and request a remarking.
- 811 requests are active for 28 days. Notify USA if work continues beyond that time.
- Immediately notify utilities about any type of contact or damage to their wires or pipes.
- If there is any type of damage to PG&E electric wires or gas pipelines, or if there is a possible gas leak, take these steps promptly:
 - Move to a safe location
 - Call 911
 - Call PG&E at 1-800-743-5000



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