

Natural Disasters: Considerations when you have a pipeline on your land

Natural disasters are harrowing and can be really frightening when they impact your family, property and livelihood. The effects of the fires, floods and landslides in British Columbia in 2021 will be felt by those landowners for a long time. These disasters can change contours and topography of the land through erosion, scour and debris left behind, and the drainage that was present before the disaster may not be there anymore.

It's natural for people to want to get to work, clean up the debris and get everything back to normal as soon as they can, but there are some things that landowners must take into consideration before going into action, and pipeline companies have an obligation to provide you with the information you need to do this work safely.

If you have a pipeline on your property, flooding may have reduced the depth of earth cover over the pipe so that it may not be safe to drive even light equipment across it. Contact the pipeline company before driving across the pipeline or moving any soil to confirm that it is safe to do so. Pipeline companies are required to provide that information in writing, and it is information that you require to keep you and your family and your property safe.

As always, any time that you are replacing fences/fence posts, removing earth cover, adding earth cover or changing/clearing drainage paths near a pipeline (30 meters either side of the pipeline), it is a ground disturbance and you need to contact the pipeline companies to confirm the location of the pipe and to ensure that the depth of earth cover over the pipe is adequate.

Care must be taken when adding soil, such as building a berm, so pipeline company and/or power line company consent is required. A berm changes accessibility for maintenance of a buried infrastructure, but also reduces ground to wire clearance when there is an overhead power line.

If you are hiring a contractor to do some work on your land, make sure that they know that there is a federally regulated pipeline on your property, and that there are regulations they must follow that include contacting the pipeline company when they are planning the work and prior to starting it.

There are millions of kilometers of buried lines in this country that keep us warm, connected, watered and lit. Before you start any work, make sure that you contact your provincial one-call centre to have the buried pipes, cables and wires located. You can reach any one call centre in Canada at www.clickbeforeyoudig.com. Click here for more information about the [CER damage prevention regulations](#).

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