

How Deep is that Pipeline?

People may wonder how deep the pipelines on their property are buried underground, or they may assume that the pipe is several feet underground. The honest answer is that you can't make any assumptions about the depth of the pipe – even if you watched them put it in the ground when they built it.

Over the years the depth of cover over the pipe changes due to many different factors;

- compaction over time
- activities over the pipe
- cultivation or maintenance of land over the pipe
- environmental erosion due to wind and spring run-off
- natural disasters such as floods, fires and mudslides
- building berms or roads
- landscaping
- recontouring land for drainage
- soil or sod removal



These are some of the kinds of events that can lead to loss of cover over the pipe, and some of the things that can add cover over the pipe too.

The CER recently issued [Safety Advisory SA-01-2022 Depth of Cover and Agricultural Activities](#) which outlines several clauses in the [Damage Prevention Regulations \(DPRs\)](#) and the [Onshore Pipeline Regulations \(OPR\)](#) that require companies to ensure there is adequate cover over the pipeline so you can undertake agricultural activities safely.

Because the pipeline is on your land, companies have a big responsibility for damage prevention, but the landowners, land users, contractors and their employees also have a share of the responsibility. Any time you build something new, on or near the pipeline right-of-way, you have to talk to the pipeline company to get the information from them on how it can be done safely with respect to the pipeline. There may be times when the pipeline company may tell you that your plans can't be completed as submitted because it will jeopardize your safety and that of the pipeline; work with them to figure out what will be safe.

Even if you aren't building anything new, you can be proactive and let the company know that your ongoing maintenance activities may reduce the depth of cover, or maybe you just aren't sure what has taken place over the

years before you owned or worked on the property; the company can send someone out to check on it. They may not tell you the exact depth, but they can tell you whether the cover is adequate, and federally regulated companies are required to identify any specific locations where the depth of cover is inadequate.

And, as always, remember that there are millions of kilometers of buried lines in this country that keep us warm, connected, watered and lit. Before you start any ground disturbance 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 on [Damage Prevention at the CER](#).