

## **USP to Examine Potential Shift to Online-Only Homeowner Locate Requests**

Next year, Utility Safety Partners (USP) will be taking a close look at how the locate request process can continue to evolve in the coming years. One option under review is requiring homeowners to submit all locate requests online, shifting away from *Call Before You Dig*. While no decisions have been made, USP is beginning a careful evaluation of the benefits, challenges, and community impacts of such a change.

A shift to online requests could bring several important advantages. First and foremost, information provided is more accurate. Online submissions capture the details needed to process a locate more accurately than phone calls and help locators arrive fully prepared. No longer is the location of the proposed ground disturbance left to chance with the homeowners mapping it directly on their property. USP's experience, and data, over the past decade underline that the integrity of online locate requests, versus those that are called in, lead to fewer digging-related incidents—protecting people, property, and essential services. And it's convenient and ready when you are because locate requests can be submitted anytime, from any device, making it easier to plan safe projects without waiting for business hours.

USP recognizes Albertans come from all walks of life, and not everyone interacts with technology the same way. While younger or tech-confident homeowners may find web-based requests simple and intuitive, others may face barriers. Older adults, residents in rural areas with limited connectivity, or those who simply prefer phone support may find a digital-only process more difficult. Understanding these realities is central to USP's review.

USP isn't the first Notification Centre to consider this. Earlier this year, Ontario One Call mandated all locate requests to the web – including homeowners. Their positive experience has been shared among their industry peers and offers confidence to USP's consideration.

Underlining this possible shift is a new enhancement to the online locate request process – a Homeowner Account process that will be unveiled in mid-2026. The new user creation process is simplified, and a homeowner ticket will eliminate those fields related more to industrial ground disturbance projects allowing the homeowner to focus on the characteristics of their own project.

Over the coming months, USP will begin consultations with stakeholders to assess the safety benefits and operational impacts noted above including the accessibility and equity considerations, options for support, hybrid approaches, and possible phased transitions to ensure that no user is left behind should we move forward.

No matter how the request system evolves, USP remains committed to one guiding principle: every homeowner deserves a safe, easy, and reliable way to ClickBeforeYouDig™.

USP will keep the public informed as this review progresses and welcomes feedback from anyone who relies on locate services.

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