

April 19 - 25, 2021 is Utility Locator Safety Awareness Week!

Each day, Utility Locators face a number of hazards, in doing the important work they do to keep our communities safe from excavation damages. Did you know that some of the top hazards for a Utility Locator include traffic control, live construction site risks, confined space, extreme climate, dog bites, and poisonous plants? To help Utility Locators navigate these hazards, multiVIEW has compiled some vital safety tips:

Always wear your prescribed PPE & respect the signs: The use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is the last line of defense in the effort to prevent injuries. It's important to keep Personal Protective Equipment clean at all times, protect it from damage when not in use, and return it immediately to be replaced if damaged. When approaching a live construction site always respect the safety signage. Seek out the site supervisor to review safety procedures, and complete site safety hazards before completing your work.

Employ traffic control procedures: Always use a spotter person when backing in your vehicle, where one is available. Park your vehicle adjacent to the work area and in the same direction of the traffic flow. Create a traffic protection plan for every job that involves traffic control and/or potential dangers from vehicular traffic.

Familiarize yourself with Ontario's new distracted driving laws: While driving, ensure that you stay 100% focused on the road. Do not use your phone in any capacity, such as talking, texting, checking maps, looking up an address, finding a playlist etc. Other activities that count as distracted driving include eating, reading, typing an address into your GPS, and searching through a bag to find an item.

Be Mindful of confined spaces: Storm and sanitary manholes, water valve chambers and hydro and telecom vaults should not be entered unless proper confined space entry protocols are followed. When opening sewer manholes, there may be noxious gases present. Do not stick your head into the manhole to take a closer look – use a flashlight from the surface.

Apply caution when using spray paint: Be sure to direct the top of the can away from your face and body when replacing the nozzle and use gloves to prevent paint from spraying on your hands. Store spray paint in your vehicle in a safe manner to prevent accidental spraying and puncture. Do not store heavy equipment on top of spray paint cans.

Protect against heat stress: During the summer months, it's important as a Utility Locator to recognize the symptoms of heat stress. Weakness, fatigue, nausea and dizziness are the first signs. Pay attention to extreme heat alerts issued by the media and prepare yourself for the workday by stocking up on water. Try to schedule work so that the most strenuous activities can be completed before high noon. The WSIB Awareness Guide Personal Control Measures for Heat Stress is a good resource to learn more.

Mitigate insect bites: Limit your time spent outdoors at dawn and dusk, when insects are most active, and wear light-coloured, long sleeved shirts, long pants and a hat when outdoors. Use insect repellents with 20-30% DEET; and follow the manufacturers' directions for safe use. Be especially cautious around stagnant water (swamps, ditches, etc.) where insects tend to breed.

Reduce the likeliness of a dog bite: Don't approach a strange dog, especially one that's tethered or confined. Don't run past a dog as the dog's natural instinct may be to chase and catch prey. If you fall or are knocked to the ground, minimize injury by curling into a ball, placing your hands

over your head and neck and protecting your face. If possible, force objects of clothing or equipment between you and an attacking dog.

Watch out for poisonous plants: The three most harmful plants in Ontario include Giant Hogweed, Poison Ivy, and Wild Parsnip. Be sure to familiarize yourself with what these plants look like and do your best to avoid contact. If you do make contact, seek medical attention immediately.