



Iowa Bulletin: 210-23-1

Date: November 16, 2022

Subject: ENG – Safety – Activities Affecting Utilities

Purpose. To remind all NRCS employees and partners of the importance of following NRCS policy (NEM 503 - Safety, Subpart A - Engineering Activities Affecting Utilities) and Iowa Law (Iowa Code Chapter 480: Underground Facilities Information) pertaining to work in the vicinity of utilities.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2024

Explanation. This bulletin is being issued as an annual reminder of the importance of following NRCS policy pertaining to work in the vicinity of utilities. Following this policy is very important for the safety of our personnel, as well as the safety of contractors, landowners, and others who may be on the site. It may prove to be a life or death scenario as was captured in the video concerning the [Hudson Iowa Pipeline Explosion Training Video](#). This policy is also intended to prevent damage to underground facilities.

NRCS policy on activities which may affect utilities is found in the National Engineering Manual, Part 503 - Safety, Subpart A - Engineering Activities Affecting Utilities. I encourage each employee to read this policy and make sure you understand the requirements. Click here for the [National Engineering Manual](#) amendment. The following provides clarification of paragraphs C and D of IA503.4 Buried Utilities section of the amendment:

1. Paragraph C requires a reminder for contractors to notify Iowa One Call (IOC). Use the following language, or similar, for the reminder statement; "The Contractor is responsible for contacting Iowa One Call by phone at 811, or on the web at <http://www.iowaonecall.com/>. Ticket# _____. An abbreviated version of this statement is available as a block for use in AutoCAD. The construction drawings are the preferred location for this statement. Some standard drawings may already have this statement, otherwise it should be on the first sheet or Plan sheet of the project specific construction drawings. Alternatively, the reminder may be included with the construction specifications, on correspondence, or other documentation specific to the job. If the reminder is provided on the construction specifications, include a block on correspondence or other material specific to the job for the ticket number. The client or contractor may return a copy of either document with the ticket number filled in to certify conformance to the Iowa One Call law. Construction drawings or specifications prepared by Technical Service Providers and other private engineers who are doing work for NRCS programs must include this statement.
2. Paragraph D states that the contractor is responsible for submitting the ticket number (referred to as the inquiry identification number in the Iowa Code) from Iowa One Call to NRCS. The term "contractor" is meant to refer to the "excavator" on the project. This is the term used in the Iowa Code and it means "... a person proposing to engage or engaging in excavation." This could be any contractor working on the project or the client if they are going to engage in excavation.

DIST: E

Paragraph D also states that if "...the ticket number is not provided, NRCS must terminate assistance on the project." To clarify, if the ticket number has not been provided by the time the contractor is ready to initiate construction, the landowner is to be notified that no further technical assistance may be provided on the project, nor will NRCS be able to certify the practice for payment. However, if the contractor suspends the start of construction, and excavation as defined in Chapter 480 of the Iowa Code has not been engaged, technical assistance may resume upon receipt of a legitimate ticket number. Upon completion of the project, with all other requirements being met, the project may be certified for payment.

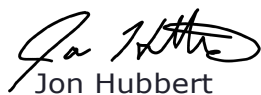
The publication, *Iowa One Call Excavators Manual (2017)*, provides additional clarification on who is required to contact Iowa One Call and obtain a ticket number. Section VII states:

"All excavators shall notify Iowa One Call at least 48 hours prior to excavating (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays.) Upon notifying IOC, excavators will be given a confirmation number, often referred to as a "dig-ticket," which excavators should keep as a reference for each excavation. IOC keeps all dig tickets on file for six (6) years. Iowa law requires the person actually doing the digging (excavating) to notify IOC with locate request information. Excavators may **not** use a dig-ticket established by another excavator. Contractors and sub- contractors may **not** use the same dig-ticket. If a professional excavator (contractor) is hired by a homeowner to perform an excavation, it is the professional excavator who must notify IOC - **not** the homeowner.

3. The responsible NRCS employee, or partner employee, must document action taken which shows that this policy has been followed. This may be done in the Conservation Assistance Notes or on other appropriate notes specific to a project.

The client, and contractor if available at the time, must be informed of this requirement in the pre- design phase (as referenced in the Statement of Work, Pre-Design section). The ticket numbers can be confirmed by anyone using the "Search For A Ticket" tool on the Iowa One Call website. It is extremely important that this policy be adhered to for the safety of all personnel involved with a construction project, and to prevent costly damage to utilities.

Any questions concerning the contents of this bulletin should be directed to Christian Osborn, State Conservation Engineer, at 515-323-2220 or Christian.Osborn@usda.gov. Further information may be obtained at www.iowaonecall.com.



Jon Hubbert
State Conservationist