

Guidance for requesting a markout before excavating

New Jersey Law requires that notification to the New Jersey One Call Center (1-800-272-1000) for any excavation type work be made prior to your excavation. It is important to be aware and understand what you need to know before you notify the Center with your request. Know exactly what the scope of your excavating project entails and where the work will be done.

The law recommends the use of white paint to outline your proposed excavating area when appropriate. Defining your work location with white paint has several advantages. When facility operators (utilities) arrive to mark their facilities they know exactly where the excavating will take place based on your request and seeing the white paint at the site. This should eliminate any confusion of where the excavation will take place and assure all utilities are marked in that vicinity. Isolating the work location(s) with white paint will also reduce the amount of paint that the utilities have to use to identify where their facilities are located. This will eliminate excessive paint on roads and sidewalks, which will help, maintain the esthetics in your community.

How and when to use white paint for your excavating site

White paint should be used when you have a fairly small excavating area, multiple locations similar to the size mentioned above or you are in an open area with no close landmarks to reference where you will be digging, as it is stated “where appropriate”.

Some examples would be:

- Planting trees or bushes
- Installing sign posts or poles
- Installing utility poles
- Working on a water valve box or
- Any distinct location where digging or driving anything into the ground

Putting down white paint and contacting the One Call Center:

If using white paint for your excavating site the law requires that your digging is contained inside your white marks (circle/box). If you have several locations on the same request that are marked in white it is recommended that you identify the locations on the markout request and at the excavating site, such as “areas marked in white labeled 1,2,3 or A, B, C”. Even though you can only dig within the white marks, the law requires that facility operators mark any of their facilities within a 10’ radius of the outside of your white marks.

You can either contact the call center by calling (1-800-272-1000) or faxing your request to the center at 1-800-705-4559 using the fax-a-locate form available from New Jersey One Call (“www.nj1-call.org”)

Commence your excavation:

After you have contacted the Call Center to notify them of your excavating project, and have waited three full business days from when you placed the call, you can commence your excavation. Before you put a shovel in the ground, take a moment to make a site observation to see if everything looks OK. If you see something that does not look right, such as a facility not marked that you know should be, contact that facility operator if you know who it belongs to or call the Call Center again and inform them that a utility has not marked out their facilities. If you know the facility owner who has not marked, indicate that to the Call Center. The law requires facility operators to notify the excavator within three business day from their initial notification to the Call Center if none of their facilities are in conflict with their excavation or are located within the 10' perimeter of the white paint marks that the excavator has placed on the ground indicating where they will be excavating.

By taking these extra steps you can prevent damages to underground facilities, reduce unnecessary interruptions of utility services, and provide a safe environment for your workers and your community.