

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

## Ontario1Call

Homeowners will be embarking on home improvement projects around their property yet many are still in the dark when it comes to call or click before you dig, even though it is law in Ontario. And there is a lot at stake. In 2016, an estimated \$975 million was spent across Canada on societal costs related to damage to underground utilities. In 2017, there was a 12% increase in utility damages across Ontario, and 347 incidents were caused by homeowners and farmers.

Hitting a utility line could lead to property damage, contamination, loss of service, injury and even death. To help homeowners stay safe this digging season, we've rounded up answers to commonly asked questions about ensuring a safe excavation:

### ***What is a utility locate?***

Prior to excavating in a project area, a utility locate request prompts utility owners to confirm the location of utilities that could potentially be impacted. Utility owners will ensure that utilities within your project area are properly marked with paint and/or flags and that a drawing, or locate sketch, is provided to guide the excavator in avoiding utility damage/strikes.

### ***How is a utility locate requested?***

In Ontario, a utility locate is requested by contacting Ontario One Call at 1 800-400-2255 or [www.on1call.com](http://www.on1call.com).

### ***Who is responsible for securing a utility locate? If I've hired a contractor to work on my property, is it my responsibility or theirs?***

If you are undertaking the excavation around your property, it is your responsibility to secure the locate. If you're hiring a contractor to complete the excavation for you, they should secure the locate. The person who is physically completing the excavation is responsible for

obtaining the locate regardless of who owns the property. If your contractor is obtaining the locate, check in with them and make sure it's been completed before permitting them to begin the excavation.

### ***How much notice does Ontario One Call require?***

[Ontario One Call](#) requires (5) five business days' notice for non-emergency requests, but it's a good idea to allow as much lead time as possible so that work can be scheduled effectively.

### ***How much does it cost to request a locate?***

Requesting a locate through Ontario One Call is free.

### ***How does the Ontario One Call Process work?***

You can contact Ontario One Call to request a locate 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. You will be asked to provide a range of information that includes your contact details along with the location of the dig site, the type of work occurring on the property, whether you're excavating at the front, back, or side of the property, whether you're digging by hand or machine, and so on. When you request a locate, you will receive a ticket from Ontario One Call – review your ticket to ensure there are no errors or omissions. If you notice an error or omission, contact Ontario One Call at 1-800-400-2255 to let them know.

Once your request has been placed, Ontario One Call will notify owners of infrastructure in the excavation area. The infrastructure owners or their respective Locate Service Providers will respond in one of three ways: a clear; a locate; or a request for more time to respond.

A “clear” means it's been determined that your activity has low to no conflict with the buried vital infrastructure. A locate refers to marking the ground where the infrastructure is situated and providing paperwork to back up the markings. This paperwork includes instructions on how to dig safely around the marked infrastructure.

### ***What is the difference between a private and public locate and does Ontario One Call cover both?***

Public utility lines are those owned by utility companies such as Hydro, Rogers or Enbridge. The maintenance of these utilities usually ends where the meter of the particular line is.

Beyond the meter and up to the building or home, including the backyard, is then consider a private utility line, for which the property owner is responsible. Examples of privately-owned infrastructure include gas lines that run from a gas meter to a pool or BBQ and electrical lines that run from a house to a garage. **Private utility lines are not covered under Ontario One Call and you will need to hire a Locate Service Provider such as multiVIEW to locate these lines for you.**

***When do I know that it's safe to dig on my property?***

It is safe to begin excavation when all relevant infrastructure owners have responded with a clear or have performed the locates and provided the corresponding paperwork.

***What should I do if I accidentally strike a utility line?***

If you damage any infrastructure through digging, contact the infrastructure owner as quickly as possible. Cease digging until the infrastructure has been inspected by a representative from the utility company. Even the slightest contact can cause problems in the future if the infrastructure has been nicked or scratched.

Learn more about [utility locating services for homeowners](#)



**Dig Safe Fact:** 347 utility damages that occurred in 2017 were due to a homeowner or farmer not securing a utility locate prior to excavation.