

# Safety Alert

May 2015



## “Dial Before You Dig” (DBYD) Digging Safely

Stay safe and observe the law when digging near essential services- electricity, gas, communications and water.

If you are planning excavation works, you must ensure that any work undertaken will not damage electricity cables, gas/water pipeline or communications infrastructure. Tough laws and penalties apply to essential services infrastructure damage.

Additionally, damage to underground infrastructure can result in major personal or business expense, injuries and even death.

The “Dial Before You Dig” (DBYD) initiative is a free national community service that can help you avoid damage to underground pipes and cables.



### How the Service Works

To identify the owners and location of underground infrastructure before undertaking excavation works, lodge a request for information through DBYD website at [www.1100.com.au](http://www.1100.com.au) or by calling the enquiry service on Tel: 1100 between 8.00am and 5.00pm.

Once lodged, DBYD will send a referral on your behalf to members who have underground assets in the area you are planning to excavate.

Usually, within two working days you will receive plans or other information from the asset owners as to the location of their assets near your dig site.

### Understand Your Responsibilities

**It is an offence** to damage cables or pipes, whether the damage is deliberate or a person has been reckless or negligent.

The legislation is not designed to penalise responsible people who DBGD or landowners carrying out normal activities that do not endanger underground infrastructure. Nor do they stop qualified people lawfully doing gas work on pipelines or electricity work on cables.

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## Digging Safely

You cannot be too careful when it comes to safe excavation.

Avoiding underground pipe and cable damage is as simple as having the right tools, the right skills and the right information. Each Asset Owner can provide information on their requirements in regard to safe digging practices. This may include manually exposing the network. Simply contact the Asset Owner to find out how to work safely around their underground networks. Their contact details will be found on the Confirmation Sheet you receive from DBGD or on the information sheet you receive from the Asset Owner.

Study the plans you receive from Asset Owners thoroughly. Check to see if they relate to the area you requested and make sure you understand them. If you are unclear about what the symbols mean or how to proceed, contact the relevant network owner.

When working in the vicinity of underground networks, it is important to observe any instructions stated on the plans provided by the Asset Owner. Underground assets may be as little as a few millimetres below the surface.

Unfortunately, not all of Australia's underground Asset Owners are members of DBYD. Therefore never assume that the plans you receive from your enquiry represent the only underground assets in your excavation area.

Note: Underground location plans provide information about network presence only; they do not pinpoint the exact location.

## The Four P's of Excavation

There is an easy way to ensure you take all the right steps in making your excavation project a success. Just follow **the Four P's of Excavation:**

### Plan

Plan your job. Use the DBYD service at least two business days before your job is due to begin to ensure you have the correct information you need to carry out a safe project.

### Pothole

Potholing (hand digging/proving) is a method to assist in establishing the exact location of all underground infrastructure. Should be undertaken by hand and not by the bucket of an excavator, back hoe or skid steer.

### Protect

Protecting and supporting exposed infrastructure is the responsibility of the excavator. Always erect safety barriers in areas at risk to protect underground networks.

### Proceed

BUT only when you have planned, potholed and put protective measures in place.

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## Before Starting

- Use facility records and visual inspection to gather site information to determine hazards, exposures and/or other potential safety problems;
- Identify any site characteristics that may impact safety on the job;
- Locate potentially dangerous physical obstructions and plan how to work around them;
- Consider traffic hazards and traffic management requirements as well as “No Go Zones” obligations;
- Identify soil conditions and other factors like trenches, pits, bores, standing water, etc. that could affect safety and plan how to work around them;
- Have emergency telephone contact numbers including WorkSafe (Tel: 132 360), and locate the nearest hospital and how to get there in the event of a workplace injury/incident emergency; and
- Develop a safety plan including procedures, employee roles, equipment and time requirements.

## When Locating Assets

- The owner/operator and locator must identify all hazards and train employees to be aware of them while conforming to federal, state/territory, local regulations and industry codes.

## Worker Safety

You have a Duty of Care to ensure that:

- Employees and subcontractors are trained and briefed on all safety measures such as exposure to potentially hazardous conditions, avoiding unnecessary risks, and putting safety first;
- All workers wear Personal Protective Equipment and Clothing (PPE/C) and high visibility safety clothing, including vests/jackets worn fastened;
- Safety features for ladders, electrical test devices, and other working instruments are in working order; and
- Any confined space your workers have to enter is safe, controlled and adequately monitored and/or ventilated. Please note: Some Asset Owners have restrictions on entering confined spaces and have specific health and safety induction and training requirements.

## When You Have Finished

- Ensure that all personnel and equipment are accounted for and the site is safe;
- Ensure that all safety related equipment is returned/restored; and
- Conduct a work safety review of the locating activity and specify what improvements could be made.