Damage Prevention

Excavation and construction around transmission pipelines is one of the most common causes of damage to buried pipelines. And, unfortunately, pipeline damage caused by these activities can pose a serious risk to the public, the environment and the pipeline itself.

**Where are buried pipelines located?** Before any work takes place, including digging, scraping or even placing heavy equipment, along the right-of-way, buried pipelines must be located. Pipeline markers are signs found along the right-of-way, typically at road or river crossings, to identify approximately where the buried pipelines are located. However, these markers should not be solely relied on for the exact location, path or depth of a pipeline.

**How do we prevent pipeline damage?** Most Canadian provinces have a One-Call Centre or a Call Before You Dig program to alert pipeline owners and operators of excavation and construction projects that could damage a pipeline. Parties who plan to excavate near a pipeline have an obligation to contact a One-Call Centre before digging or conducting ground disturbance activities near buried pipelines. If a One-Call Centre does not exist, the party should contact the pipeline operator(s) directly.

Upon receipt of a locate request, the One-Call Centre will notify the pipeline operator(s) in the vicinity of the activities that could result in damage to the pipeline. Within two to three business days, the pipeline operator will contact the caller to determine the next steps. However, regardless of the timeframe, the caller should wait to hear from the pipeline operator before proceeding. Identifying the location of pipelines will help prevent damage and minimize risk to the public and the environment.
Who’s responsible? Preventing damage to pipelines is everyone’s responsibility. Both pipeline operators and various stakeholders, including landowners and excavators, have a shared responsibility to protect themselves, their workers, the public and the environment by acting in a responsible and prudent manner.

**Pipeline Operators must:**
- construct pipelines in accordance with accepted practices and governing regulations
- respond in a timely manner to requests for line locates from the digging community
- develop an awareness of and respect for the digging community’s concerns and the constraints under which it does business
- be proactive in damage prevention activities

**Other stakeholders, including the public, must:**
- recognize the dangers in disturbing the ground near pipelines
- always contact a One-Call Centre at least three working days before digging or conducting ground disturbance activities near buried pipelines
- wait until the lines are located
- follow the instructions from an authorized pipeline operator representative
- report any damages to the pipeline operator immediately

What are the consequences? The potential consequences of damaging a pipeline could range from service disruptions to environmental impacts to serious injuries or even the potential loss of life. As urban populations grow, the likelihood of pipeline damage due to construction work, such as excavating near pipelines, increases. This type of damage is preventable. Please call before you dig.

For more information on damage prevention, please visit:
Canadian Energy Pipeline Association - www.aboutpipelines.com
Canadian Common Ground Alliance - www.canadiancga.com
Provincial One-Call Centres across Canada

Figures 4: Excavation by hand