

Pipeline Markers

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Did you know that pipelines have been in place since the 1800's? After the drilling of the first commercial oil well in 1859 in Pennsylvania, short underground pipelines were installed to transport oil from drill holes to nearby refineries. As demand for transporting liquid and gas commodities grew, utility companies developed higher quality and longer pipelines made from more durable materials. In the 21st century, it's fascinating to think back to the days when oil was transported by wagons and wooden pipes!



Past (Wooden Pipe)

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Present (Exposed Pipeline)

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According to the Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety (MNOPS), Minnesota has over 70,000 miles of pipelines, so protecting all of them is essential to ensure public and environmental safety. In addition to joining Gopher State One Call (GSOC) to receive notifications about excavators working near their lines, pipeline operators use permanent markers and warning signs to proactively alert excavators to the presence of buried lines.

Above-ground markers are located at intervals along the “pipeline right-of-way”. According to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), a federal agency that develops and enforces national pipeline safety regulations, the pipeline right-of-way is “...a strip of land over and around pipelines where some of the property owner’s legal rights have been granted to a pipeline company. A right-of-way agreement between the pipeline company and the property owner is also called an easement and is usually filed in the public records with property deeds. Rights-of-ways and easements provide a permanent, limited interest in the land that enables the pipeline company to operate, test, inspect, repair, maintain, replace, and protect one or more pipelines on property owned by others.”

Pipeline markers display the name of the facility operator, the type of product that is being transported, and an emergency contact phone number. Although permanent markers are a clear indicator of the presence of an underground pipeline, remember that aboveground warning signs show only a pipeline’s approximate location. The paint and flags a locator places when responding to your GSOC locate request are the best guide to the pipeline’s actual location. Pipeline markers serve as a reminder to contact GSOC when you see them anywhere near your planned work area.



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The best way to prevent dangerous incidents from happening is to start by contacting GSOC 48 hours in advance, excluding weekends and holidays, to get your underground facilities marked before you begin your excavation. Then hand dig at least two feet (the tolerance zone) on both sides of the marked utility. It's easy, free, and the law!



Customer Support
(651)681-7326

To File a Locate Request:

-  Twin Cities Metro 651-454-0002
- Greater MN Area 800-252-1166
- Emergency 866-640-3637
- Or you can go online at www.gopherstateonecall.org



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