



White Marking in the Winter

By: Lareina Taing

Planning an excavation project this winter? One essential step that you must take before contacting Gopher State One Call (GSOC) is to white line your proposed excavation area. Minnesota State Law Chapter 216 D.05 states that all excavators must use white markings for proposed excavations, except where it can be shown that it is not practical¹.

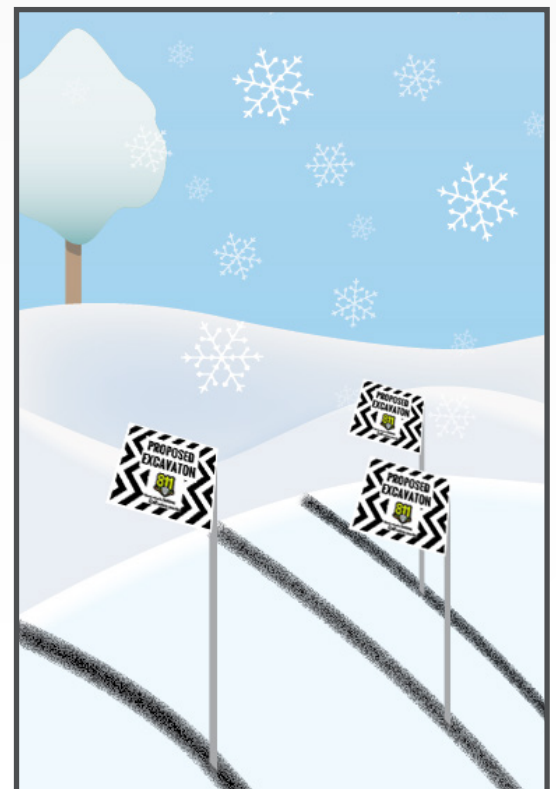
According to the Common Ground Alliance (CGA), white lining is the practice of marking your route of excavation with “white paint, flags, stakes, or a combination of these to outline the dig site prior to notifying the one call center and before the locator arrives on the job. [White lining] allows the excavators to accurately communicate to facility owners/operators or their locator where excavation is to occur.”² White lining will also help to eliminate the locating of underground facilities that are not involved in the work area and reduce unnecessary paint marks on streets, sidewalks, and other areas.

GSOC understands that white lining in Minnesota winter conditions can be a tricky endeavor due to the white nature of snow. You may be wondering, “How can I effectively white line my excavation area if there is snow on the ground?”

Recommended practices for marking in the snow:

1. When snow is present, you want to make sure that all white lining marks are visible. **Black paint³ and white flags or stakes with black lettering⁴** are alternatives to marking with white paint. Remember to indicate the use of alternate colored markings on your locate request.
2. Sufficiently white line your **entire excavation area** to allow locators to properly mark your utility lines. Include a safety buffer when marking the area.⁵
3. **Properly maintain** your marks until all utility lines are located. If the snow melts and your marks are lost, contact GSOC to get your area remarked.

White lining is an important step in the safe digging process. Although it can be a difficult task in the winter,



you must define your proposed excavation area to follow Minnesota law. Doing so will prevent any miscommunication with the locator and will help to ensure the protection of buried utilities. Once you have white lined your work area, you may contact GSOC 48 hours in advance, excluding weekends and holidays, before you begin your excavation project. Feel free to contact us with any questions you may have!

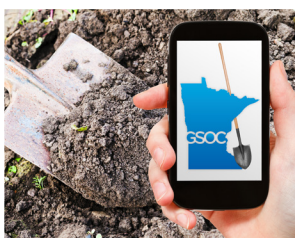
Source¹: The Office of the Revisor of Statutes. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

Source²: CGA. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

Source³: JULIE. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

Source⁴: MNCGA. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

Source⁵: GSOC Handbook. Click [HERE](#) for more information.



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



www.facebook.com/gopherstateonecall



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