

Safety Flash: Incident with Property Damage

Incident: A subcontractor's operator struck a fax/phone line while using a mini-excavator to remove about 12 inches of asphalt. The operator had dug over the line four times earlier and did not strike the line.

Possible contributing factors:

- The operator assumed that the line was deeper than 12 inches based on the four earlier crossings.
- Paint marks were present and the crew did not locate the lines in accordance with the RLI utility locating procedure before beginning work.
- The crew relied on the previous pot hole that did not indicate the presence of the line.
- RLI did not review the RLI utility locating procedure with the subcontractor before the incident.
- The subcontractor completed the Notice of Excavation (NOE), but RLI didn't verify that the subcontractor followed the NOE requirements before work began.

Primary contributing factor

- RLI did not review the RLI utility locating procedure with the subcontractor before the incident.
- The subcontractor completed the Notice of Excavation (NOE), but RLI didn't verify that the subcontractor followed the NOE requirements before work began.

Possible solutions

- Review utility locating procedure and NOE with subcontractors before they begin work.
- Ensure all NOE requirements are met before RLI signs the form and work begins.
- Review with all superintendents and project managers the requirement to review the utility locating procedure and verify NOE requirements are met.

Action plan

- Review the utility policy with all subcontractors involved.
- Perform a pre-install with all subcontractors onsite that are excavating.
- Conduct documented training for all superintendents and project managers on the utility locating procedure and proper completion and verification of the NOE.

Keep improving

Your health and safety are our core value on every project. If you see a way we can support you in keeping our job sites safe, see your supervisor or contact: Jim Philo, 419/654-2043; Rich Franklin, Michigan, 734/679-7283; Alan Doane, Cleveland, 440/429-0639; or Mark Hoffman, 419/360-9280.