

Buried Utilities

There are often deadly hazards lurking underground on excavation sites. Rupturing or breaking underground utilities such as electrical power cables and pipelines can result in serious injuries or even death.

A Worksite Story

A construction crew was using an auger to dig a hole for anchoring a utility pole support cable. Suddenly the auger hit a small plastic gas line. Escaping gas soon reached a nearby building, where it ignited about 20 minutes later. Four people died and 15 were injured. In addition, three buildings were destroyed and more than a dozen others had extensive damage.

✘ **Are you familiar with the steps you can take to avoid injury around buried utilities on a work site?**

✘ **Have you ever had contact with buried utilities? If so, what happened?**

Remember This

Before digging

- Look for paint or flags marking locations of electrical lines. Electrical lines should also have a warning device, such as a range control or limit. You should know how each is marked.
- Review marked-out areas. They may not be exact. If not sure, call the utility company to verify before digging.
- Plan to dig by hand when working within 2 feet of a mark-out, to make sure you do not hit a utility line or conduit with heavy equipment. Ask your supervisor to identify the expert who will review the work area before work begins and as needed during your shift.

When digging, look for

- Signs of previous digging
- Changes in soil types
- Asphalt patches or depressions
- Concrete, plastic, or gravel

If you hit a line, you must report it! If it's a gas line, evacuate everyone, secure the area, and call the fire department.

How can we stay safe today?

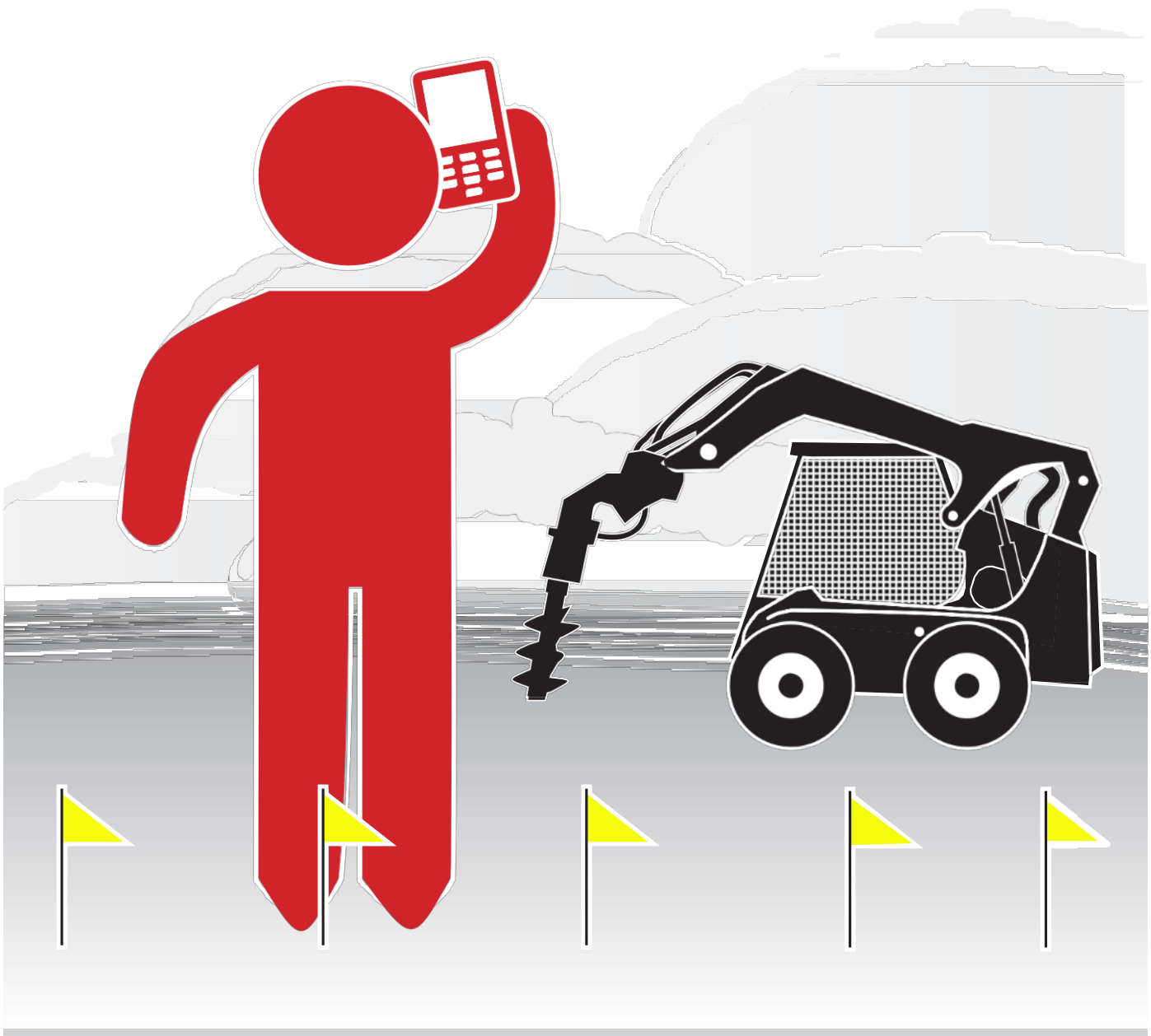
What will we do at the worksite to prevent injuries from buried utilities?

1. _____

2. _____

OSHA Regulations: 1926.651; 1926.652; 1926.1408

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- ⚡ Look for electrical lines and other utilities. Electrical lines should be marked with red paint or flags. Check with your supervisor to confirm the utilities have been properly marked.
- ⚡ Look for gas lines. They should be marked with yellow paint or flags.
- ⚡ If you hit a line, you must report it! If it's a gas line, evacuate everyone, secure the area, and call the fire department.