



Ohio Revised Code

Section 153.64 Protecting underground utility facilities during construction of public improvement.

Effective: June 9, 2026

Legislation: House Bill 227

(A) As used in this section:

(1) "Public improvement" means any construction, reconstruction, improvement, enlargement, alteration, or repair of a building, highway, drainage system, water system, road, street, alley, sewer, ditch, sewage disposal plant, water works, and all other structures or works of any nature by a public authority.

(2) "Public authority" includes the following:

(a) The state, or a county, township, municipal corporation, school district, or other political subdivision;

(b) Any public agency, authority, board, commission, instrumentality, or special district of or in the state or a county, township, municipal corporation, school district, or other political subdivision;

(c) A designer as defined in section 3781.25 of the Revised Code who is acting on behalf of any entity described in division (A)(2)(a) or (b) of this section.

(3) "Underground utility facilities" includes any item buried or placed below ground or submerged under water for use in connection with the storage or conveyance of water or sewage; or electronic, telephonic, or telegraphic communications; electricity; petroleum products; manufactured, mixed, or natural gas; synthetic or liquified natural gas; propane gas; or other substances. "Underground utility facilities" includes, but is not limited to, all operational underground pipes, sewers, tubing, conduits, cables, valves, lines, wires, manholes, and attachments, whether owned by any public or private or profit or nonprofit person, firm, partnership, company, corporation, joint stock association, joint venture, or voluntary association, wherever organized or incorporated, except for a private septic system in a single- or multi-family dwelling utilized only for that dwelling and not connected to any



other system.

(4) "Protection service" means a notification center not an owner of an underground utility facility that complies with the following:

(a) It exists for the purpose of receiving notice from public authorities and from other persons that plan to prepare plans and specifications for, or engage in, public improvements involving digging, blasting, excavating, or other underground construction activities;

(b) It distributes the information described in division (A)(4)(a) of this section to its members and participants;

(c) It has registered by March 14, 1989, with the secretary of state and the public utilities commission under former division (F) of this section as it existed on that date.

(5) "Construction area" means the area delineated on the plans and specifications for the public improvement within which the work provided for in the contract will be performed.

(6) "Interstate gas pipeline" means an interstate gas pipeline subject to the "Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act of 1968," 49 U.S.C. 1671, as amended.

(7) "Interstate hazardous liquids pipeline" means an interstate hazardous liquids pipeline subject to the "Hazardous Liquid Pipeline Safety Act of 1979," 49 U.S.C. 2002, as amended.

(B)(1) In any public improvement which may involve underground utility facilities, the public authority, prior to preparing plans and specifications, shall contact a protection service for the existence and location of all underground utility facilities within the construction area.

(2) If requested by the public authority, each owner of underground utility facilities within the construction area, other than real property owners listed in divisions (C)(1) to (4) of section 3781.25 of the Revised Code, shall do one of the following within ten days of receiving notice from the public authority or a protection service:



(a) Mark the location of the underground utility facilities, other than those facilities serving single-family or two-, three-, or four-unit dwellings, within the construction area in accordance with the marking standards described in division (C) of section 3781.29 of the Revised Code;

(b) Provide digital or paper drawings, or both, that meet both of the following requirements:

(i) They are drawn to scale and include locatable items. Locatable items may include poles, pedestals, back of curb, sidewalk, edge of pavement, centerline of ditch, property lines, and other similar items.

(ii) They depict the location of the underground utility facilities.

(3) If the public improvement is within six hundred sixty feet of the center point of any interstate hazardous liquid pipeline or interstate gas pipeline, the pipeline operator shall provide to the public authority all of the following:

(a) A written notice of any special notification requirements;

(b) The location and description of any right-of-way associated with the pipeline as well as pipeline location information, such as providing documents reflecting the actual location of the pipeline, marking facilities on design drawings, and providing maps;

(c) Contact information for the primary contact person for the project area.

Compliance with divisions (B)(2) and (3) of this section does not relieve an owner of underground utility facilities from compliance with the marking requirements of section 3781.29 of the Revised Code.

(4) The public authority shall include, in the plans and specifications for such improvement, the identity and location of the existing underground utility facilities located in the construction area as provided to the public authority by the owner of the underground utility facility and the name, address, and telephone number of each owner of any underground utility facilities in the construction area.



(a) If the public authority is notified that the improvement is within six hundred sixty feet of the center point of any interstate hazardous liquid pipeline or interstate gas pipeline, the public authority shall also include in the plans and specifications for the project all of the following:

(i) Any special notification requirements;

(ii) The name and contact information of the primary contact person for each pipeline operator who has provided notice to the public authority under division (B)(3) of this section;

(iii) Notice stating that the public authority has utilized reasonable means to contact the pipeline operator to verify the location of the pipeline and pipeline right-of-way;

(iv) Notice that the public authority has reviewed, or has attempted to review, preliminary information about the public improvement with the pipeline operator and incorporated the requested adjustments into the plans.

(b) For purposes of division (B)(4)(a)(iii) of this section, a public authority who provides notice to the protection service in accordance with division (B)(1) of this section is deemed to have utilized reasonable means to contact the operator of the pipeline.

(5) Any anticipated temporary or permanent relocation of underground utility facilities deemed necessary by the public authority shall be negotiated or arranged by the public authority with the owners of the underground utility facilities prior to the start of construction. If a temporary or permanent relocation of utility facilities is necessary, the owner of the underground utility facility shall be given a reasonable time to move such utility facilities unless the contractor to whom the contract for a public improvement is awarded or its subcontractor agrees with the owner of the underground utility facility to coordinate relocation with construction operations.

(6) The public authority, within ten calendar days after award of a contract for a public improvement, shall notify in writing all owners of underground utility facilities known to be located in the construction area of the public improvement of the name and address of the contractor to whom the contract for the public improvement was awarded. Where notice is given in writing by certified mail,



the return receipt, signed by any person to whom the notice is delivered, shall be conclusive proof of notice.

(C) The contractor to whom a contract for a public improvement is awarded or its subcontractor, at least two working days, not including the day of the notification, but not more than sixteen calendar days prior to commencing construction operations in the construction area which may involve underground utility facilities, shall cause notice to be given to the protection service. The owner of the underground utility facility, within at least two working days, not including the day of the notification, shall stake, mark, or otherwise designate the location of the underground utility facilities in the construction area in such a manner as to indicate their course together with the approximate depth at which they were installed.

(D) If the public authority fails to comply with the requirements of division (B) of this section, the contractor to whom the work is awarded or its subcontractor complies with the requirements of division (C) of this section, and the contractor or its subcontractor encounters underground utility facilities in the construction area that would have been shown on the plans and specifications for such improvement had a protection service been contacted, then the contractor, upon notification to the public authority, is entitled to an increase to the contract price for itself or its subcontractor for any additional work that must be undertaken or additional time that will be required and is entitled to an extension of the completion date of the contract for the period of time of any delays to the construction of the public improvement.

In the event of a dispute as to the application of this section, procedures may be commenced under the applicable terms of the construction contract, or if the contract contains no provision for final resolution of the dispute, pursuant to the procedures for arbitration in Chapter 2711. of the Revised Code.

This section does not affect rights between the contractors and the public authority for any increase in contract price or additional time to perform the contract when the public authority complies with division (B) of this section.

Any public authority who complies with the requirements of division (B) of this section and any contractor or its subcontractor who complies with the requirements of division (C) of this section



shall not be responsible to the owner of the underground utility facility if underground utility lines are encountered not as marked in accordance with the provisions of division (C) of this section by the owner of the underground utility facility, unless the contractor or its subcontractor has actual notice of the underground utility facility. Except as noted in this division, this section does not affect rights between the contractor or its subcontractor and the owner of the underground utility facility for failure to mark or erroneously marking utility lines. The public authority shall not make as a requirement of any contract for public improvement any change in responsibilities between the public authority and the owners of the underground utility facilities in connection with damage, injury, or loss to any property in connection with underground utility facilities.

The contractor or its subcontractor shall alert immediately the occupants of nearby premises as to any emergency that the contractor or subcontractor may create or discover at or near such premises. The contractor or its subcontractor shall report immediately to the owner or operator of the underground facility any break or leak on its lines or any dent, gouge, groove, or other damage to such lines or to their coating or cathodic protection, made or discovered in the course of their excavation.

(E) This section does not affect rights between the public authority and the owners of the underground utility facilities for responsibility for costs involving removal, relocation, or protection of existing underground utility facilities, or for costs for delays occasioned thereby.