



Ohio Revised Code

Section 3781.25 One-call utility protection service definitions.

Effective: June 9, 2026

Legislation: House Bill 227

As used in sections 3781.25 to 3781.38 of the Revised Code:

(A) "Protection service" means a notification center, but not an owner of an individual utility, that exists for the purpose of receiving notice from persons that prepare plans and specifications for or that engage in excavation work, that distributes this information to its members and participants, and that has registered by March 14, 1989, with the secretary of state and the public utilities commission of Ohio under former division (F) of section 153.64 of the Revised Code as it existed on that date.

(B) "Underground utility facility" 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; electronic, or telephonic communications; television signals; electricity; crude oil; petroleum products; artificial or liquefied petroleum; manufactured, mixed, or natural gas; synthetic or liquefied natural gas; propane gas; coal; steam; hot water; or other substances. "Underground utility facility" includes all operational underground pipes, sewers, tubing, conduits, cables, valves, lines, wires, worker access holes, and attachments, owned by any person, firm, or company. "Underground utility facility" does not include a private septic system in a one-family or multi-family dwelling utilized only for that dwelling and not connected to any other system.

(C) "Utility" means any owner or operator, or an agent of an owner or operator, of an underground utility facility, including any public authority, that owns or operates an underground utility facility. "Utility" does not include the owners of the following types of real property with respect to any underground utility facility located on that property:

- (1) The owner of a single-family or two-, three-, or four-unit residential dwelling;
- (2) The owner of an apartment complex;
- (3) The owner of a commercial or industrial building or complex of buildings, including but not



limited to, factories and shopping centers;

(4) The owner of a farm;

(5) The owner of an exempt domestic well as defined in section 1509.01 of the Revised Code.

(D) "Approximate location" means the immediate area within the perimeter of a proposed excavation site where the underground utility facilities are located.

(E) "Tolerance zone" means the site of the underground utility facility including the width of the underground utility facility plus eighteen inches on each side of the facility.

(F) "Working days" begin at midnight, end at eleven fifty-nine p.m. on the same date, and exclude weekends and legal holidays as defined in section 1.14 of the Revised Code and "hours" excludes hours on weekends and legal holidays.

(G) "Designer" means an engineer, architect, landscape architect, contractor, surveyor, or other person who develops plans or designs for real property improvement or any other activity that will involve excavation.

(H) "Developer" means the person for whom the excavation is made and who will own or be the lessee of any improvement that is the object of the excavation.

(I) "Excavation" means the use of hand tools, powered equipment, or explosives to move earth, rock, or other materials in order to penetrate or bore or drill into the earth, or to demolish any structure whether or not it is intended that the demolition will disturb the earth. "Excavation" includes such agricultural operations as the installation of drain tile, but excludes agricultural operations such as tilling that do not penetrate the earth to a depth of more than twelve inches. "Excavation" excludes mining and reclamation operations regulated under Chapters 1513. and 1514. of the Revised Code and rules adopted under it. "Excavation" excludes all of the following activities when performed in the public or utility right-of-way:

(1) Milling and grinding of road surfaces up to the following depths without penetrating the earth or



sub-base:

(a) For interstate routes, twelve inches;

(b) For multi-lane routes outside of municipal corporations, whether divided or undivided, six inches;

(c) For multi-lane divided routes inside municipal corporations, six inches;

(d) For all other roadways, six inches.

(2) Utility wood pole inspection utilizing hand tools to excavate to a depth that does not penetrate the earth more than twelve inches and working on the clear side of poles, greater than ninety degrees from any risers;

(3) Tilling for sowing of grass and wildflower coverings to a depth that does not penetrate the earth more than four inches for erosion control or beautification purposes;

(4) Placement of temporary signage, without penetrating the earth more than four inches;

(5) Localized pavement repairs on all areas outside municipal corporations, without penetrating the earth or sub-base, to a depth not greater than twelve inches;

(6) Any activity conducted solely in response to a valid notification, provided that such activity is performed exclusively by means of hand tools. This exemption shall apply irrespective of whether the activity occurs within or outside the boundaries of a road right-of-way. If a transmission facility is within the scope of the notification, coordination between the responding party and the transmission facility owner must take place for this exemption to exist.

(7) Activities conducted entirely within twelve inches in any horizontal direction and twelve inches in any vertical direction from an existing, exposed, or visible utility appurtenances, as defined in division (Z) of this section, provided such activities are performed exclusively with hand tools and do not otherwise disturb the surrounding subsurface area. This exemption shall apply irrespective of



whether the activity occurs within or outside the boundaries of the road right-of-way.

(J) "Excavation site" means the area within which excavation will be performed.

(K) "Excavator" means the person or persons responsible for making the actual excavation.

(L) "Interstate gas pipeline" means an interstate gas pipeline subject to the "Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act of 1968," 82 Stat. 720, 49 U.S.C. 1671, as amended.

(M) "Interstate hazardous liquids pipeline" means an interstate hazardous liquids pipeline subject to the "Hazardous Liquid Pipeline Safety Act of 1979," 93 Stat. 1003, 49 U.S.C. 2002, as amended.

(N) "Special notification requirements" means requirements for notice to an owner of an interstate hazardous liquids pipeline or an interstate gas pipeline that must be made prior to commencing excavation and pursuant to the owner's public safety program adopted under federal law.

(O) "Commercial excavator" means any excavator, excluding a utility as defined in this section, that satisfies both of the following:

(1) For compensation, performs, directs, supervises, or is responsible for the excavation, construction, improvement, renovation, repair, or maintenance on a construction project and holds out or represents oneself as qualified or permitted to act as such;

(2) Employs tradespersons who actually perform excavation, construction, improvement, renovation, repair, or maintenance on a construction project.

(P) "Person" has the same meaning as in section 1.59 of the Revised Code and also includes a public authority.

(Q) "Positive response system" means an automated system facilitated by a protection service allowing a utility to communicate to an excavator the presence or absence of any conflict between the existing underground utility facilities and the proposed excavation site.



(R) "One-call notification system" means the software or communications system used by a protection system to notify its membership of proposed excavation sites.

(S) "Project" means any undertaking by a private party of an improvement requiring excavation.

(T) "Public authority" has the same meaning as in section 153.64 of the Revised Code.

(U) "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.

(V) "Emergency" means an unexpected occurrence causing a disruption or damage to an underground utility facility that requires immediate repair or a situation that creates a clear and imminent danger that demands immediate action to prevent or mitigate loss of or damage to life, health, property, or essential public services.

(W) "Nondestructive manner" means using low-impact, low-risk technologies such as hand tools, or hydro or air vacuum excavation equipment.

(X) "Cable service provider" has the same meaning as in section 1332.01 of the Revised Code.

(Y) "Electric cooperative" and "electric utility" have the same meanings as in section 4928.01 of the Revised Code.

(Z) "Utility appurtenances" means the physical components and legal rights attached to a property that are necessary for providing utility services such as water, electricity, gas, communications, and sewage. These include items like, but not limited to, utility poles, meters, valves, and electrical boxes, as well as easements that allow utility companies to access the property for installation, maintenance, and repair. They are essential for the property's use and typically transfer with ownership.

(AA) "Localized pavement repair" means repair of areas of pavement requiring deeper removal in order to correct a pavement deficiency that is not common or cannot be sufficiently repaired in the



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overall pavement milling area of work.