



JR CIVIL, LLC
"SAFETY-QUALITY-PRODUCTION"

December 17, 2024

Public Service Commission
Attn: Konrad Crockford
600 East Blvd, Dept. 408
Bismarck, ND 58505

RE: North Dakota Century Code Chapter 49-23: One-Call Excavation Notice System

Dear Mr. Crockford,

I received your letter dated December 5, 2024, on December 16, 2024, and had a follow-up phone call with you the same day for an explanation of what is required from JR Civil. From my understanding of the letter and our conversation, you have requested a summary explanation of the three-utility line strikes on our project in North Dakota. The following shall be considered accurate to the best of my knowledge for the events that took place leading up to each strike, during each strike, and the events following each strike.

Strike One: .75" Plastic Gas Line Hit 7/25/2024

JR Civil was contracted for a waterline replacement project for the city of Rhame, ND. During the course of the project, work areas in town were divided into phases by date and scope of work. The phased areas were supervised by JR Civil Superintendents + a JR Civil General Superintendent. Work areas were called into the ND One-Call system prior to excavation activities to identify and locate underground utilities. Strike One is associated with locate number 24081492. This locate ticket identified an underground gas line in our excavation area.

Without the direction or permission of a JR Civil's Superintendent, one of the Operators began trench line excavation utilizing an excavator. Furthermore, the Operator began excavation operations without a ground "spotter". The result of this activity caused a .75" plastic gas line to be hit. When noticed, the Operator notified one of the JR Civil Superintendents, who then in turn shut the operations down, contacted the ND One-Call service to notify them of the hit line, and evacuated the area until MDU sent a repair crew.

After repairs were made to the plastic gas line, the JR Civil Superintendent and General Superintendent began an internal investigation of the incident to identify the leading causes of the utility strike. Once discovered that the Operator began operations without permission, supervision, or a safety groundmen; the Operator was terminated of employment and removed from the jobsite. JR Civil Supervisors held an onsite safety stand-down with the employees to review the proper procedures for excavation around identified utilities.

Strike Two: .75" Plastic Gas Line Hit 8/27/2024

Strike two is associated with locate number 24113342. This locate ticket was a either a refresh ticket or a new ticket associated with an area that had already been excavated and located at least once before. During this timeframe and at this location, trench line excavation and installation of water mains and/or water services had been completed; the crews were beginning backfill operations. An existing gas line was identified in the backfill work area.



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During the backfill process, crews are instructed to use low pressure backfill tamping devices (jumping jacks or plate compactors) directly over utilities. After at least 1' of backfill has been completed, they can begin using machine mounted compacting devices (roller wheels attached to an excavator). In this instance, the crews did not comply with directions and began backfill operations utilizing machine mounted devices only. The increased down pressure and penetration depth of the compaction device caused the .75" plastic gas line to get "snagged", ultimately rupturing the line. The crews informed the JR Civil Superintendent, who then cleared the area and contacted MDU for repairs.

After repairs were made to the plastic gas line, the JR Civil Superintendent and General Superintendent began an internal investigation of the incident to identify the leading causes of the utility strike. Once discovered that the crew did not follow proper backfill procedures, the JR Civil Superintendents held an onsite safety stand-down with the employees to review the proper procedures for backfill operations and issued a warning to the Operator.

Strike Three: .75" Plastic Gas Line Hit 9/9/2024

Strike three is associated with locate number 24113342. This locate ticket was either a refresh ticket or a new ticket associated with an area that had already been excavated and located at least once before. During this timeframe and at this location, trench line excavation and installation of water mains and/or water services had been completed; the crews were beginning backfill operations. An existing gas line was identified in the backfill work area.

Strike three has the same leading cause for the utility strike and Strike Two, however this occurred with a different crew.

After repairs were made to the plastic gas line, the JR Civil Superintendent and General Superintendent began an internal investigation of the incident to identify the leading causes of the utility strike. Once discovered that the crew did not follow proper backfill procedures, the JR Civil Superintendents held an onsite safety stand-down with the employees to review the proper procedures for backfill operations and issued a warning to the Operator.

Furthermore, the JR Superintendents and General Superintendent held an all-site meeting with all crews. The meeting covered all three incidents that occurred, the leading causes, and refresher training on excavations operations and backfill operations.

Overview and Wrap-Up

As with all projects, inherent risks are ever present, especially considering many of the projects involve rehabilitation of existing underground utilities. JR Civil holds safety and communication in the highest regards during a construction project. We have and will continue to perform to the best of our abilities to identify risks and potential hazards while providing strict field oversight to avoid not only service interruptions but to limit or eliminate hazards to crews, subcontractors, suppliers, and the general public.



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Ongoing and annual training is an important aspect of our field crews. JR Civil's Superintendents will continue to monitor field operations, create job hazard analysis plans to limit hazards, and review work plans with Foremen, Operators, Laborers, and the like.

Intentional disregard for the proper one-call procedures, safe practices for excavation and backfill, or general project work is never acceptable. JR Civil will continue to perform all aspects of projects for private, government, and municipal clients in a safe and professional manner.

For additional questions or clarification, please contact me at 406-200-5058 (cell) or alex.h@jrcivil.com

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Heesch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alex Heesch
Project Manager