



D-240262

Washington State Dig Law Safety Committee

1673 S Market Blvd, #121
Chehalis, WA 98532

June 7, 2024

Received
Records Management
Jun 7, 2024

Committee Members
Represent:

Local Government

Natural Gas Utility

Contractors

Excavators

Electric Utility

Consumer Owned Utility

Pipeline Utility

Water Utility

Utilities and
Transportation
Commission

Telecommunications
Company

Three At-Large Positions

Jeff Killip, Executive Director, and Secretary
UTC Records Center
Utilities and Transportation Commission
621 Woodland Square Loop SE
Lacey, WA 98503

Re: WA State Dig Law Safety Committee Response to Docket D-240262 - Notice of Opportunity to Respond

Dear Mr. Killip:

Thank you for the opportunity to file comments in this very important docket. The Safety Committee understands and supports the law imposing a broad responsibility upon the facility operator to mark the location of any locatable facilities, even if they are unmapped.

Over the years, there have been multiple cases presented to the Safety Committee where facilities were unmapped, but not once has the facility operator been granted an exception to their ownership of the plant in the ground, nor their liability. In other words, no (or inaccurate) mapping does not make a facility unlocatable.

In this instance where an entire street has been located and there is one home in the middle of the block with no gas, a reasonable person would have questioned and investigated further. The term "unlocatable" in the dig law is meant to address facilities that cannot be located due to the type of material of the facility that was installed or the manner that it was installed (no tracer wire or conductive material was used) rather than the fact its existence is unknown.

Finally, by Avista's own account of the situation, they had two other gas stubs that were located and marked on the 1500-foot residential locate. The fact that the gas stub in question wasn't marked doesn't make it unlocatable, it makes it an error.

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding this response. You may contact me at 206-794-9823.

Sincerely,

Jim Walton, Chair
WA Dig Law Safety Committee

Cc: Zella West, Vice Chair, WA Dig Law Safety Committee
Lynda Holloway, WA Dig Law Safety Committee
Don Evans, Executive Administrator, WA811