

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**NOTICE OF PENALTIES INCURRED AND DUE
FOR VIOLATIONS OF LAWS AND RULES**

PENALTY ASSESSMENT: DG-210209

PENALTY AMOUNT: \$5,000

SERVICE VIA EMAIL

Investigation # 8344

UBI: 603-432-909

DDB LLC.

6103 Balsam Ct.

West Richland, WA 99353

DARRELL@DDBLLC.NET

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) believes that DDB LLC (DDB or Company) has violated Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 19.122.055(1)(a) by failing to notify one-number locator service before beginning excavation. RCW 9.122.055(1)(a) states, in part, that excavators who fail to notify a one-number locator service and cause damage to an underground gas facility are subject to a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000 for each violation.

The Commission reviewed findings and recommendations made by Commission staff (Staff) and hereby notifies you that it is assessing a \$5,000 penalty against you on the following grounds:

On September 25, 2020, DDB was excavating at 4821 Starburst Ct., West Richland, Washington. The Company was digging for sewer and struck a Cascade Natural Gas (CNG) gas line. The Damage Information Reporting Tool report submitted by CNG on October 8, 2020, indicates the Company was digging without a valid locate ticket.

Staff conducted an investigation that included reviewing damage reports, communications with CNG, and the One-Call Ticket database. Staff initiated contact with DDB seeking further information or documentation but, as of the date of this Notice, Staff has not received any additional information regarding the facts in this case. The documents reviewed identified a natural gas event that involved DDB damaging a natural gas line while excavating without a valid locate ticket.

Previously, in May 2017, the Commission mailed a Dig Law violation warning letter to DDB in response to an alleged Dig Law violation. Further, in December 2018, November 2019, and July 2019, the Commission assessed monetary penalties against DDB for violations of RCW 19.122.055.

Due to the Company's repeated Dig Law violations, Staff recommends that the Commission assess a \$5,000 penalty against DDB LLC for one violation of RCW 19.122.055(1)(a) for failing to notify one-number locator service before beginning excavation.

Staff recommends that \$2,500 of the penalty assessment be suspended for one year and then waived, subject to the following conditions: (1) DDB LLC supervisors and applicable field staff attend NUCA Dig Safe Online Training within 90 days of receiving this Notice and (1) the Company must not commit any further violations of RCW 19.122 within twelve (12) months of the date of this notice.

The Commission agrees with Staff's recommendation and assesses a penalty of \$5,000 with an offer to suspend, and ultimately waive, the \$2,500 penalty amount subject to the conditions listed above. If the Company fails to comply with either of the conditions, the \$2,500 suspended penalty will become immediately due and payable, in addition to any new penalties that the Commission may assess for new additional violations.

These facts, if not contested or if proved at a hearing and not rebutted or explained, are sufficient to support the penalty assessment.

Your penalty is due and payable now. If you believe the violation did not occur, you may deny committing the violation and contest the penalty through evidence presented at a hearing or in writing. Or, if there is a reason for the violation that you believe should excuse you from the penalty, you may ask for mitigation (reduction) of the penalty through evidence presented at a hearing or in writing. The Commission will grant a request for hearing only if material issues of law or fact require consideration of evidence and resolution in a hearing. Any request to contest the violation or for mitigation of the penalty must include a written statement of the reasons supporting that request. Failure to provide such a statement will result in denial of the request. *See* RCW 81.04.405.

If you properly present your request for a hearing and the Commission grants that request, the Commission will review the evidence supporting your dispute of the violation or application for mitigation in a Brief Adjudicative Proceeding before an administrative law judge. The administrative law judge will consider the evidence and will notify you of their decision.

You must act within 15 days after receiving this notice to do one of the following:

- Pay the \$5,000 penalty amount due; or
- Pay \$2,500 and notify the Commission that you accept the offer to suspend, and ultimately waive the \$2,500 penalty amount subject to the following conditions;
 - DDB LLC supervisors and applicable field staff must attend online Dig Safe training <https://utc-9183.quickbase.com/db/bpkt6vndh> within (90) days of this Notice; and
 - **The Company must submit documentation of that attendance to the Commission within five (5) days of attending training;** and
 - DDB LLC must not commit any additional violation of RCW 19.122 within twelve (12) months of the date of this Notice; or
- Request a hearing to contest the occurrence of the violation; or
- Request mitigation to reduce the amount of the penalty.

Please indicate your selection on the enclosed form and send it to the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, P.O. Box 47250, Olympia, Washington 98504-7250, **within FIFTEEN (15) days** after you receive this notice.

If you do not act within 15 days, the Commission may refer this matter to the Office of the Attorney General for collection. The Commission may then sue you to collect the penalty.

DATED at Lacey, Washington, and effective May 21, 2021.

/s/Rayne Pearson
RAYNE PEARSON
Director, Administrative Law Division

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
PENALTY ASSESSMENT DG-210209, Investigation #8344

PLEASE NOTE: You must complete and sign this document and send it to the Commission within 15 days after you receive the penalty assessment. Use additional paper if needed.

I have read and understand RCW 9A.72.020 (printed below), which states that making false statements under oath is a class B felony. I am over the age of 18, am competent to testify to the matters set forth below and I have personal knowledge of those matters. I hereby make, under oath, the following statements:

1. **Payment of penalty.** I admit that the violation occurred and enclose \$5,000 in payment of the penalty.

2. **Accept the Conditions.** I admit that the violation occurred and enclose \$2,500 toward the payment of the penalty. I also accept the Commission's offer to suspend and ultimately waive, the remaining \$2,500 penalty amount subject to the following conditions:

- **DDB LLC** supervisors and applicable field staff must attend dig safe training provided through NUCA within twelve (12) months of the date of this Notice; and
- **DDB LLC must submit documentation of that attendance to the Commission within five (5) days of attending the training;** and
- **DDB LLC** must not commit any additional violations of RCW 19.122 within twelve (12) months of the date of this Notice.

3. **Contest the violation.** I believe that the alleged violation did not occur for the reasons I describe below (**if you do not include reasons supporting your contest here, your request will be denied**):

a) I ask for a hearing to present evidence on the information I provide above to an administrative law judge for a decision.

OR b) I ask for a Commission decision based solely on the information I provided above.

4. **Request mitigation.** I admit the violation, but I believe that the penalty should be reduced for the reasons set out below (**if you do not include reasons supporting your application here, your request will be denied**):

a) I ask for a hearing to present evidence on the information I provide above to an administrative law judge for a decision.

OR b) I ask for a Commission decision based solely on the information I provided above.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that the foregoing, including information I have presented on any attachments, is true and correct.

Dated: _____ [Month/Day/Year], at _____ [City, State]

Name of Respondent (Company) – please print

Signature of Applicant

RCW 9A.72.020:

“Perjury in the first degree. (1) A person is guilty of perjury in the first degree if in any official proceeding he makes a materially false statement which he knows to be false under an oath required or authorized by law. (2) Knowledge of the materiality of the statement is not an element of this crime, and the actor’s mistaken belief that his statement was not material is not a defense to a prosecution under this section. (3) Perjury in the first degree is a class B felony.”