

CHAPTER 8

Public Education and Awareness Task Team Best Practices

8.1 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Public education and awareness must be more than just “Call Before You Dig.” In support of this belief, the scope of the Public Education and Awareness Task Team focused on overall underground damage prevention. The Task Team’s mission was to identify practices that promote awareness of damage prevention and the use of one-call systems.

The Task Team identified and described nine best practices to educate the public and promote awareness of damage prevention and the use of one-call systems. These are:

1. Use of a Marketing Plan
2. Target Audiences and Needs
3. Use of Structured Education Programs
4. Target Mailings
5. Use of Paid Advertising
6. Use of Free Media
7. Use of Giveaways
8. Establishing Strategic Relationships
9. Measuring Public Education Success

Implementation of these practices will help to ensure that all participants in the excavation process understand the applicable laws, rules and regulations. It will also help to achieve the best utilization of available educational resources and prevent damage to all underground and submerged facilities. A successful damage prevention education program will result in a significantly enhanced level of safety for the public and the excavator, a reduction in environmental damage, and improved service reliability.

An existing, joint government/industry Damage Prevention Quality Action Team (DAMQAT), organized by the U. S. Department of Transportation, Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA), Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS), looked at many current public education practices to determine the best course of action to implement a damage prevention public education campaign. The DAMQAT developed and implemented the **Dig Safely** public education campaign. A successful, six-month pilot of the **Dig Safely** campaign was conducted in three states: Georgia, Tennessee, and Virginia. A nationwide roll-out of the campaign began in June 1999.

The Public Education Task Team was linked closely with the DAMQAT and utilized many of its findings. The primary focus of the DAMQAT **Dig Safely** campaign is on four key messages:

- Call Before You Dig
- Wait the Required Time
- Respect the Marks
- Dig with Care

The Public Education and Awareness Task Team agreed with these messages. However, the practices evaluated by the Task Team are *methods* of public education (i.e., how to get the message out) rather than a specific message. Public education and awareness of underground damage prevention is a major marketing effort involving the identification of target audiences, unique characteristics of different geographic regions, and specific practices and goals.

8.2 TEAM MEMBERS

The following people participated as Task Team members in the identification, evaluation and selection of Public Education and Awareness Best Practices. A brief biographical sketch of each Team member, that serves to validate their participation in the Study effort, is included in Appendix F, “Common Ground Study Team Member Biographies.”

Team Member	Representing²¹	Employer
Bill Bertges	DOT, RSPA, OPS	DOT, RSPA, OPS, Southwest Region
Bob Cave	APGA	APGA
Mary-Jo Cooney, Co-chairperson	DOT, RSPA, OPS	DOT, RSPA, OPS, HQ
Morris Dock	AGC	Mo Do Co, Inc.
Ronald G. (Ron) Embry	API/ AOPL	Exxon Pipeline Company
Mark Frost	OCSI	JULIE, Inc.
Pat Kirchberg	OCSI	US West
Craig Linn	INGAA	Williams Gas Pipeline - Transco
Stu Megaw	AGC	AGC
N. Allen Robertson	NULCA	Byers Locate Services, LLC
Larry Shamp, Co-Chairperson	API	Equilon Pipeline Company
Dan Simpson	NTDPC	Worldcom Network Services
Pamela Wagner	NUCA	NUCA

Others that participated in the Task Team’s discussions but did not participate in the consensus decision process include:

²¹ See Appendix D for a detailed list of acronyms.

Team Participant	Representing	Employer
Glynn Blanton, Linking Team Liaison	NARUC	Tennessee Regulatory Authority
Willard S. Carey, Steering Team Liaison	AGA	AGA
Richard Rapposelli	AMTRAK	AMTRAK
Claudette Campbell, Linking Team Liaison	OCSI	Utilities Protection Center of Georgia, Inc.
Massoud Tahamtani, Linking Team Liaison	NAPSR	Virginia State Corporation Commission

8.3 DATA COLLECTION AND EVALUATION PROCESS

8.3.1 Information sources

The Task Team drew heavily on the collective experience and expertise of Team members as well as the previous efforts of the Damage Prevention Quality Action Team.

8.3.2 Process for collecting information

The process began with discussions of the components of current damage prevention education efforts. “Brainstorming” sessions were conducted among Team members to identify target audiences. Additional brainstorming sessions resulted in the identification and association of methods and materials currently being used to convey the damage prevention message to the target audiences. As noted above, these discussions utilized many of the DAMQAT findings. Each Team member also was charged to interact with his/her represented constituent organizations to get input regarding current education practices.

8.3.3 Process for selecting and developing practices

The Team discussed the criteria to be used in determining “what is a best practice” and agreed on the following characteristics:

- It is being done today.
- It is cost efficient.
- It is effective.
- It should respect the past.
- It should applaud the present.
- It should look to the future.
- It is flexible and adaptable.
- It can be implemented across a wide spectrum [of industry].
- It should be available to and supported for use by stakeholders.

Positive feedback from some of the represented constituents was received on the criteria.

The Task Team agreed on an outline to be used in the discussion of best practices that involved the mix of target audiences, materials, and methods. After further evaluation, it was agreed that the major items of the discussion outline represented the best practices to be used in damage prevention education. These are:

1. Use of a Marketing Plan
2. Target Audiences and Needs
3. Use of Structured Education Programs
4. Target Mailings
5. Use of Paid Advertising
6. Use of Free Media
7. Use of Giveaways
8. Establishing Strategic Relationships
9. Measuring Public Education Success

A format was adopted by the Task Team for documenting best practices. The format is as follows:

Practice Title: A brief title to identify the practice (e.g., “Disaster Recovery”)

Practice Statement: One or more sentences that provide a brief and concise statement of the practice (e.g., “Each one-call center should have a disaster recovery plan . . .”)

Practice Description: One or more paragraphs that more fully describe the practice, along with the intent, purpose, basis, etc. of the practice

References: Identifies the references used to identify and document the practice

“Practice Advocates” were identified to take responsibility for the development and documentation of the practice statements and descriptions for each practice. The practice advocates were also responsible for identifying and preparing material to support the inclusion of the current practices. The material prepared by the practice advocates served as the basis for discussion and further development of the practice language that was agreed to by consensus among the Team members.

After the Task Team created a thorough draft of the nine practice statements (noted in Section 8.4, “Findings”), a survey was sent to all one-call centers in the United States. (The survey was sent independently by team member Mark Frost, representing One Call Systems International.) The survey requested each Call Center Executive Director to indicate which of the nine practices were currently in use at their respective center. It also allowed space for respondents to provide examples or further information explaining how the center puts the statement into practice.

The following twenty (20) one-call centers responded to the survey:

Alabama Line Location Center, Inc.(AL)	Arizona Blue Stake, Inc. (AZ)
Utility Notification Center of Colorado (CO)	Connecticut Call Before You Dig (CT)
Utilities Protection Center of Georgia, Inc. (GA)	Dig Line-Idaho (ID)
JULIE, Inc.- Illinois (IL)	Iowa Underground Plant Location Service (IA)
Kentucky Underground Protection Inc. (KY)	Mississippi One-Call System, Inc. (MS)
Missouri One-Call System, Inc. (MO)	New Mexico One-Call System, Inc. (NM)
New York City-Long Island One-Call Center (NY)	North Carolina One Call Center, Inc. (NC)
Ohio Utilities Protection Service (OH)	Oklahoma One-Call System, Inc. (OK)
Oregon Utility Notification Center (OR)	Texas One-Call System (TX)
Miss Utility of West Virginia, Inc. (WV)	Wisconsin Diggers Hotline, Inc (WI)

Results from the survey are incorporated into the references for each best practice noted below, by indication of the states responding positively to the related question.

8.4 FINDINGS

The Task Team agreed on the following Public Education and Awareness Best Practices:

1. Use of a Marketing Plan
2. Target Audiences and Needs
3. The Use of Structured Education Programs
4. Target Mailings
5. The Use of Paid Advertising
6. The Use of Free Media
7. The Use of Giveaways
8. Establishing Strategic Relationships
9. Measuring Public Education Success

1. Use of a Marketing Plan

Practice Statement: An effective damage prevention education program includes a comprehensive, strategic marketing/advertising plan.

Practice Description: A comprehensive, strategic marketing/advertising plan enables better implementation, control, and continuity of advertising/public relations programs and ensures the most effective and efficient use of limited resources. These plans focus on setting realistic goals and allocating sufficient resources required to achieve those goals within a specified time frame. The marketing plan is a set of action steps based on a comprehensive situation analysis that clearly states:

- C **What** is to be achieved,
- C **How** it will be achieved,
- C **When** it will be achieved,
- C **Who** is responsible for achieving each goal, and
- C **What** amount of resources (time, people, and money) will be allocated to achieving each goal.

References:

- C Louisiana One Call Systems, Inc. Project 2000, 1998 Marketing Plan.
- C Public Awareness Marketing Plan for Underground Utility Damage Prevention, prepared for the Damage Prevention Quality Action Team by The Daily Planit, November 20, 1997.
- C Underground Protection Center (UPC) of Georgia.
- C Various one-call centers including: AL, AZ, CT, GA, IL, IA, KY, MO, NM, NY (City), NC, OK, OH, OR, WV, and WI.

2. Target Audiences and Needs

Practice Statement: An effective damage prevention education program includes identification of target audiences and their individual needs.

Practice Description: Identification of target audiences will ensure maximum impact for the **Dig Safely** message. The following target audiences have been identified as examples:

- C Construction management
- C Excavation equipment operators
- C Excavators
- C Public works excavators
- C Locators
- C Railroads
- C Participating facility owners/operators
- C Non-participating facility owners/operators (i.e., not one-call members)
- C Marine operations
- C Children

- C Property owners/tenants
- C Emergency responders/local emergency planning committees
- C News media

When target audiences are identified, their specific needs can be more readily addressed. This will allow the identification of media (e.g., free advertising, advertising, brochures, meal meetings, handouts, etc.) which can most effectively be used to deliver the message. This will also allow customization of the message itself. Coordination with other strategic partners can assist in reaching the greatest number of people.

References:

- C Various one-call centers including: AL, AZ, CO, CT, GA, ID, IL, IA, KY, MS, MO, NM, NY (City), NC, OK, OH, OR, TX, WV, and WI.
- C NUCA and various NUCA state chapters.
- C API, INGAA, and AGA member companies.
- C AGC chapters.

3. The Use of Structured Education Programs

Practice Statement: An effective damage prevention education program is structured to accommodate the needs of individual audiences.

Practice Description: Damage prevention education programs that are structured to accommodate the needs of individual audiences are essential to effectively communicate the message of damage prevention for underground facilities. For example:

- Structured education presentations in association with meal functions are an effective method to communicate with organized groups such as emergency responders and equipment operators.
- Guest speaker appearances are effective with property owners groups, civic clubs, etc.
- Awareness videos are effective education tools for children’s groups such as scout troops and schools.
- One-call center tours are effective for educating the public, news media, facility locators, excavators and operators on the overall one-call system and damage prevention process.
- Contractor and construction trade shows are unique opportunities to deliver the damage prevention public education message.

- Training videos and multi-media presentations are effective to reach facility owner/operator locating staffs, customer service personnel, and one-call center liaisons.

References:

- C Various one-call centers including: AL, AZ, CO, CT, GA, ID, IL, IA, KY, MS, MO, NM, NY (City), NC, OK, OH, OR, TX, WV, and WI.
- C Current industry materials, programs, and practices.
- C National Land Improvement Contractors Association.
- C API, INGAA, and AGA member companies.
- C Industry associations including: AGC chapters, NUCA, and NTDPC.
- C Various contract locating firms.

4. Target Mailings

Practice Statement: An effective damage prevention education program communicates vital damage prevention, safety, and emergency response information to target audiences through periodic mailings.

Practice Description: Target mailings can effectively communicate essential damage prevention, safety, and emergency response information. Direct mailings, with local information, are useful with residents and businesses that lie within a specified area. Such mailings are especially useful for reaching those residents and businesses that are in the corridor of the underground facility or proposed excavation route. Some examples are listed below:

- Direct mailed billing statements are ideal for including inserts provided by the one-call center, since the connection between underground facilities and **Dig Safely** can be readily made by the consumers.
- Additionally, space for a damage prevention message can be dedicated on the facility owners/operators' newsletters that are often included with the billing statements.
- Direct mailings, either in the form of letters or newsletters, are effective in targeting audiences such as lumber yards and stores, hardware stores, heavy equipment sellers, and rental equipment stores. These mailings can offer support materials such as point-of-purchase brochure displays for sales counters, posters for retail aisles where digging equipment is found, and key chains for rental equipment ignition keys.
- An annual excavator newsletter, originated and mailed directly by the one-call center to all identifiable excavators in the call center's jurisdiction, keeps the customer base involved and informed of changes to the damage prevention system.
- Specialized brochures or letters can be mailed directly to address such issues as: failure to follow local damage prevention laws, guidance to homeowners to understand the damage

prevention process, and special requirements when excavations occur in agricultural or rural settings.

Target mailing lists are developed using a combination of facility owners/operators' and one-call center internal sources, support partner mailing lists, and zip-code + 4/SIC code mailing lists. There are numerous software applications and databases available in the marketplace to support this.

References:

- C Various one-call centers including: AL, AZ, CT, GA, ID, IL, IA, KY, MS, MO, NM, NY (City), NC, OK, OH, OR, WV, and WI.
- C API Recommended Practice 1123.
- C 49 CFR Parts 192, 194, and 195.

5. The Use of Paid Advertising

Practice Statement: An effective damage prevention education program includes paid advertising to increase damage prevention awareness and practices.

Practice Description: Paid advertising through event sponsorships, radio, television, and print media is an effective means for communicating one-call system information and safe-digging requirements to target audiences. Paid advertising is particularly effective for reaching general excavators, construction designers and managers, equipment operators, property owners and tenants, farmers, facility owners/operators, and the general public. However, the use of paid advertising can be very costly and a measurement for success should be implemented early in the advertising campaign to gauge effectiveness. Measurements could include increased locate ticket volume or increased number of first-time callers to a one-call center. Additionally, creative placement of the message can ease the expense of paid advertising and enhance its effectiveness. Examples include transit system signs, sponsorship of news and weather reports on radio and television, industry trade exhibits and events, and print messages in trade publications.

References:

- C Various one-call centers including: AL, CO, CT, GA, ID, IL, IA, KY, MS, MO, NM, NY (City), NC, OK, OH, OR, WV, and WI.
- C Current facility owner practices, including various oil pipeline companies such as Marathon-Ashland Pipeline Company, Northwest Pipeline Company, and Equilon Pipeline Company.

6. The Use of Free Media

Practice Statement: An effective damage prevention education program utilizes all available free media.

Practice Description: When identified and used correctly, free media can be highly effective to communicate the **Dig Safely** message at minimal cost. For organizations with limited budgets, use of free media should be emphasized.

Press Releases: This tool is the preferred method to communicate “newsworthy” information about your damage prevention program to newspapers, trade publications and radio stations. Examples of occasions/events that are appropriate for press releases are:

- Call-Center milestones (millionth call, record month, record day),
- Year in Review (call volume statistics, damage reduction/increases),
- Election of New Board Members,
- Announcement of Excavator Safety Program Schedule,
- Announcement of New Utility Member,
- Changes to the State/Local Damage Prevention Law, and
- Seasonal “Call Before You Dig” Reminders.

A basic press release, containing the **Dig Safely** message and fundamental information about the damage prevention program is on file for distribution to newspapers and other periodicals who often run special sections on topics such as home improvement and safety around the home. Following is a sample press release.

**JULIE, INC., 3275 EXECUTIVE DRIVE
JOLIET, IL 60435-8434 (815) 741-5000**

NEWS

Contact: Mark A. Frost, Public Relations Manager
Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (815) 741-5005
After 5:00 p.m. (815) 439-6727
FAX (815) 741-5958

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 1999

**JULIE, INC./ LOCAL UTILITIES TO SPONSOR EXCAVATOR
SAFETY BREAKFASTS**

JULIE, Inc., the Illinois One-Call System serving all of the state excluding the City of Chicago, in conjunction with local underground facility companies, is sponsoring twenty-four excavator safety breakfast meetings across Illinois. The breakfasts are being held to increase excavator awareness of

the underground facility dangers that exist and to encourage use of Illinois' facility notification system prior to the start of any project involving digging. Area breakfasts include . . . (please refer to attached list).

Each meeting will begin at 7:45 AM with a free breakfast buffet and will conclude by 9:30 AM. Attendees will view the latest JULIE safety video, "It's Where Safe Digging Starts," see local underground facility company displays, hear about the latest changes at JULIE, and have the chance to address their concerns and questions to JULIE and local underground facility company representatives. Every attendee will receive a free gift and one cash attendance drawing of \$100 will occur at each breakfast.

For more information and/or to reserve a seat contact the JULIE, Inc. Public Relations Department at (815) 741-5000.

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Not-for-Profit Public Service Announcements (PSAs): Television and radio stations, as well as billboard companies, are often willing to donate air time or space for Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to not-for-profit organizations. To qualify, the organizations must have a safety-related message that benefits the general public.

Member Facility Owners/Operators: The member facility owners/operators of the damage prevention system are, in effect, another source of free media for the **Dig Safely** message:

- Major facility owners/operators that purchase paid advertising on television, radio, and billboards can require that free **Dig Safely** PSAs be included in any media buy they make.
- Cable TV members should be provided copies of any **Dig Safely** commercial and encouraged to run it as a PSA on their system. (Many cable members have created their own messages for this purpose!)
- All members facility owners/operators should be offered vehicle bumper stickers and posters to place on their locating and service vehicles promoting the "Call Before You Dig" phone numbers.

State/Local Government: State and local governments can be yet another source of free media for your damage prevention education program. The following are successful examples of their use:

- Proclamation by Governor of “Call Before You Dig” Month.
- Inclusion of safe-digging messages on state tollway/highway electronic message boards.
- Damage prevention messages in community newsletter of member municipal facility operators.

References:

- C Various one-call centers including: AL, AZ, CO, CT, GA, ID, IL, IA, KY, MS, MO, NM, NY (City), NC, OK, OH, OR, TX, WV, and WI.
- C Various one-call center member companies, such as Media-One, GTE, TCI Cable Co., Ameritech, and others.

7. The Use of Giveaways

Practice Statement: An effective damage prevention education program uses promotional giveaway items to increase damage prevention awareness.

Practice Description: Effective damage prevention education programs use giveaways to reach targeted audiences. Examples include notepads, pens, rolodex cards, mouse pads, ignition protectors, clipboards, and magnets. Items used should reflect the unique needs and interests of the target audiences and the regions served. For example, sports towels work in many areas and with many audiences. However, beach towels are probably only effective in states or areas near beaches. Giveaways can be distributed via awareness and safety meetings, targeted mailings, sponsored events, trade shows, and other methods. In all cases, items should be usable both for work and recreation.

Reference:

Various one-call centers including: AL, AZ, CO, CT, GA, ID, IL, IA, KY, MS, MO, NM, NY (City), NC, OK, OH, OR, TX, WV, and WI.

8. Establishing Strategic Relationships

Practice Statement: An effective damage prevention education program establishes strategic relationships.

Practice Description: Strategic relationships can be defined as “Making Friends Before You Need Them.” This means having working relationships in place to leverage common resources. Successful damage prevention education programs establish strategic relationships with governmental agencies, emergency responders, associations of all types, media outlets, grass roots

organizations, and others. These relationships involve partnering to further damage prevention education efforts.

One example of such strategic relationships includes partnering with the state bureau of utilities, one-call centers, OCSI members, the Equipment Manufacturers Institute (EMI) and original equipment manufacturers to install “North American Equipment Decals” on the dashboards of new excavating equipment. Another example is the One-Call Systems Study (OCSS) for which this Report is written. The OCSS represents the establishment of a strategic relationship among various one-call systems stakeholders to further damage prevention education and awareness.

References:

- C Various one-call centers including: AL, AZ, CO, CT, GA, ID, IL, IA, KY, MS, MO, NY (City), NC, OK, OH, OR, TX, WV, and WI.
- C Illinois Commerce Commission.
- C Existing strategic relationships, such as APWA/AGC and API/NTDPC.

9. Measuring Public Education Success

Practice Statement: An effective damage prevention education program includes structured annual or biennial (every two years) measurement(s) to gauge the success of the overall program.

Practice Description: Damage prevention education program effectiveness can be gauged in several ways. For example:

- Use of a direct mail or telephone survey to effectively determine how one-call center and/or member facility customers are hearing and recalling the damage prevention message.
- Use of Arbitron Areas of Dominant Influence (ADI) boundaries to measure increases in one-call center call volume and/or member facility owners/operators’ one-call messages is also an effective measurement. For a given area, these can be compared against the money and resources used in that area for further indications of program effectiveness.
- The collection and tracking of individual or collective facility owners/operators’ damage information from year to year is another outstanding method of measuring success, providing that other internal factors at a given facility owner/operator remain constant.

References:

- C Various one-call centers including: CT, GA, IL, IA, KY, MS, MO, NC, OK, OH, and WI.
- C API Data Collection Initiative.
- C INGAA Foundation Pipeline Safety Awareness Material Focus Group Research Report.

- C “Presentation of Findings: OPS/DAMQAT Underground Facility Damage Prevention Study” (nationwide survey).
- C “Presentation of Findings: DAMQAT Pilot Evaluation Study” (regional survey).
- C Great Lakes Common Carrier Committee Six-State Survey.
- C Virginia State Corporation Commission survey on why damages occur.

8.5 MEASURING IMPROVEMENTS

The Task Team included a best practice (Practice #9, above) to address “Measuring Public Education Success.” The Damage Prevention Quality Action Team recognized the need for a Nationwide Damage Prevention and Awareness Survey and implemented it to serve as a benchmark to measure and validate future public education efforts. The Public Education and Awareness Task Team supports the use of surveys to establish benchmarks for evaluating future public education efforts on a regional/state level.

8.6 PATH FORWARD

The Public Education and Awareness Task Team discussed and considered many aspects of damage prevention education. The best practices selected and included in this chapter were considered to be the most important. Other damage prevention education practices are currently in use. These practices should continue where they are proven effective.

The Task Team considers underground damage prevention and, especially damage prevention education, a critical initiative that should continue beyond the conclusion of the Common Ground One-Call Systems Study. The Task Team recommends that RSPA supply the necessary support to continue the process. A permanent, government/industry damage prevention council should be a goal. This would provide a continuing communication vehicle to identify and encourage the implementation of additional best practices.

The Task Team recognizes that the DAMQAT will soon issue a report recommending the continuing implementation of the nationwide **Dig Safely** damage prevention education campaign. The Task Team supports this effort and encourages RSPA and Congress to recognize the benefits to be achieved by funding the implementation of that campaign. Similar to “Smokey the Bear” and other national campaign efforts, the **Dig Safely** campaign will serve to focus attention on the need for damage prevention awareness on an unprecedented level. The nationwide campaign will support and enhance parallel regional and state damage prevention education efforts.

The Task Team further recognizes current efforts to promote the North American Equipment Decal Program. The equipment decal in pictogram form provides the national one-call referral number for excavators who are not aware of the one-call center number in the particular area where they are working. The Task Team supports this effort, which combines several of the identified Public Education Best Practices, including Target Audiences and Needs, Use of Structured Education Programs, and Establishing Strategic Relationships.

The Task Team recommends that the use of the Internet be explored to further damage prevention education and awareness. Many one-call centers currently have Internet/Web pages that provide useful information. The OCSS Information System has also provided a very useful vehicle for conveying such information. Technology such as the OCSS Information System should also be considered to enhance future communications among government and industry constituents in the damage prevention process. Continuation of the current OCSS Information System would provide immediate and ongoing support for this effort.

8.7 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Acknowledgment is given to:

- C All Task Team members that actively participated in the Team's efforts.
- C All industry and government organizations that supported the effort by providing Task Team members the opportunity to participate.
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- C Herb Wilhite, Cycla Corporation, for facilitation and general support of the Task Team's efforts.