



Underground Safety Board

Information Bulletin 25-001

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The Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety (Energy Safety) – Underground Safety Board (Board) provides this Information Bulletin to alert stakeholders of recent changes to excavation law.

BACKGROUND

[Senate Bill \(SB\) 254](#) (Energy [2025-2026]) was an urgency bill and it was signed into law and became effective on September 19, 2025. The majority of SB 254 made changes to other laws not related to the Board's jurisdiction. However, several changes were made to the Dig Safe Act ([Government Code "Gov. Code" sections 4216 – 4216.21](#)) within section [4216.1](#). This section's original language became subsection (a), and a new subsection (b) was added.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Planning and Design Information Exchange (information exchange). The regional notification centers (RNCs) must facilitate the exchange of planning and design (P&D) information for infrastructure projects. All operators, except the Department of Transportation, must participate in an information exchange. As noted below, the Board and the RNCs have specific responsibilities related to implementing an information exchange which includes the Board implementing regulations by [July 1, 2027](#).

Advance intent to dig notice. The Board is required to implement regulations by July 1, 2027, that determine when an excavator must give more than a two-day notice of their intent to dig. This relates to situations where the excavator is submitting such a volume of concurrent tickets that the local operators cannot meet their 4216.3(a)(1) obligations on time.

Excavation notices to California Native American tribes. Upon request, the RNCs must provide excavation notices to a federally recognized or nonfederally recognized California Native American tribes when those excavations are within an area that the tribe is traditionally and culturally affiliated.

Report to the Legislature. As part of the Board's annual report to the Governor and Legislature, it must include a discussion on certain aspects of the development of a web-based P&D platform that will support an information exchange and allow tribes access to plans and the ability to communicate with plan submitters.

New definition: electrical infrastructure undergrounding project. There is a new definition that applies only to the new subsection (b). It states: “electrical infrastructure undergrounding project” includes, but is not limited to, undergrounding projects in an electrical corporation’s or local publicly owned electric utility’s distribution undergrounding and wildfire mitigation plans submitted pursuant to Sections 8386, 8387, and 8388.5 of the Public Utilities Code.”

IMPACTS TO SPECIFIC GROUPS

RNCs:

- RNCs must facilitate the exchange of P&D information for infrastructure projects. [4216.1\(b\)\(1\)](#)
- Upon request by a California Native American tribe (regardless of federal recognition), RNCs must notify the tribe of excavations within the geographic area with which the tribe is traditionally and culturally affiliated. [4216.1\(c\)](#)
- RNCs must submit their implementation procedures for an information exchange to the Board for review and approval. Substantive changes to implemented procedures must also have Board approval. The Board must allow public comment and engagement with stakeholders before approving the RNCs’ procedures. [4216.1\(b\)\(4\)](#)

Operators:

- All operators, except the Department of Transportation, must participate in the information exchange. [4216.1\(b\)\(1\)](#)

Board:

- By July 1, 2027, the Board must make regulations necessary to implement an information exchange. This includes, but is not limited to, timelines and standardization of the process for the information exchange, the information to be exchanged, and any other related requirements to accomplish the exchange. [4216.1\(b\)\(1\)](#)
- By July 1, 2027, the Board must make regulations to determine whether and under what circumstances an excavator must notify the RNC more than two working days before the legal excavation start date and time if the excavator is submitting a volume of concurrent notifications in excess of the capacity of the operators in the area to complete their [4216.3\(a\)\(1\)](#) locate and mark responsibilities on time. [4216.1\(b\)\(2\)](#)
- The Board’s annual report to the Governor and Legislature must include a section on the advantages, barriers, and funding options for the development of a web-based platform for accomplishing the communication processes required in the new information exchange system, and for allowing tribes to view plans for projects and to communicate with plan submitters.

All stakeholders:

- The new definition of “electrical infrastructure undergrounding project” applies only to the new subsection (b) and indicates what may qualify as that type of underground project.

SB 254 Summary of Changes and Amended Statute Texts

Gov. Code Section	Summary of Change(s)	Amended Statute Text*
<u>4216.1(a)</u>	This is the current text of 4216.1. It has become subsection (a).	“Every operator of a subsurface installation, except the Department of Transportation, shall become a member of, participate in, and share in the costs of, a regional notification center. Operators of subsurface installations who are members of, participate in, and share in, the costs of a regional notification center, including, but not limited to, the Underground Service Alert—Northern California or the Underground Service Alert—Southern California are in compliance with this section and Section 4216.9. A regional notification center shall not charge a fee to a person for notifying the regional notification center to obtain a ticket or to renew a ticket.”
<u>4216.1(b)(1)</u>	RNCs must facilitate the exchange of P&D information for underground infrastructure projects. All operators, except the Department of Transportation, must participate in the information exchange. The Board must make regulations for the appropriate timelines and processes for the information exchange, the information required to be exchanged, and any other related requirements to accomplish the exchange.	“A regional notification center shall facilitate the exchange of planning and design information for infrastructure projects, including, but not limited to, electrical infrastructure undergrounding projects, and every operator, except the Department of Transportation, shall participate in this information exchange. The board shall determine through regulation the appropriate timelines and standard processes associated with this information exchange, the information required to be shared, and the format in which it shall be shared, and any requirements that excavators and operators are required to fulfill to accomplish this information exchange.”
<u>4216.1(b)(2)</u>	The Board must make regulations to determine whether and under what circumstances an excavator must notify the RNC more than two working days before the legal excavation start date and time if the excavator is submitting a volume of concurrent notifications in excess of the capacity of the operators in the area to complete their 4216.3(a)(1) locate and mark responsibilities on time.	“To facilitate the expedient and efficient implementation of electrical infrastructure undergrounding projects, the board shall determine through regulation whether and under what circumstances an excavator is required to notify the regional notification center more than two working days before the legal excavation start date and time, if the excavator is submitting a volume of concurrent notifications in excess of the capacity of the operators in the area to complete their responsibilities under paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 4216.3 within the minimum legal excavation start date and time. The board shall not implement regulations that would do either of the following:”
<u>4216.1(b)(2)(A)</u>	The Board cannot make regulations that would restrict the ability of the excavator to submit a notification pursuant to 4216.2(b).	The Board shall not implement regulations that would do either of the following: “Restrict the ability of the excavator to submit a notification pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 4216.2.”

Gov. Code Section	Summary of Change(s)	Amended Statute Text*
<u>4216.1(b)(2)(B)</u>	The Board cannot make regulations that would restrict the ability of the excavator to submit notifications for emergency excavations.	The Board shall not implement regulations that would do either of the following: “Restrict the ability of the excavator to submit notifications for emergency excavations.”
<u>4216.1(b)(3)</u>	The Board must adopt the regulations for 4216.1 (b)(1) and (b)(2) (P&D information exchange and the large volume ticket submission) by July 1, 2027.	“On or before July 1, 2027, the board shall adopt regulations implementing paragraphs (1) and (2).”
<u>4216.1(b)(4)</u>	RNCs must submit their implementation procedures to the Board for review and approval. Substantive changes to implemented procedures must also have Board approval. The Board must have public comment and engagement with stakeholders before approving procedures.	“Before implementing procedures to implement this subdivision, a regional notification center shall submit its proposed procedures to the board for review and approval, including before implementing any substantive changes to these procedures. The board shall engage with affected stakeholder groups and allow for public comment before approving the procedures.”
<u>4216.1(b)(5)</u>	New definition: “electrical infrastructure undergrounding project” includes, but is not limited to, undergrounding projects in an electrical corporation’s or local publicly owned electric utility’s distribution undergrounding and wildfire mitigation plans submitted pursuant to Sections 8386, 8387, and 8388.5 of the Public Utilities Code.	“For purposes of this subdivision, “electrical infrastructure undergrounding project” includes, but is not limited to, undergrounding projects in an electrical corporation’s or local publicly owned electric utility’s distribution undergrounding and wildfire mitigation plans submitted pursuant to Sections 8386, 8387, and 8388.5 of the Public Utilities Code.”
<u>4216.1(c)</u>	Upon request by a federally recognized or nonfederally recognized California Native American tribe (regardless of federal recognition), RNCs must notify the tribe of excavations within the geographic area with which the tribe is traditionally and culturally affiliated.	“Upon request by a federally recognized or nonfederally recognized California Native American tribe, a regional notification center shall notify the tribe of proposed excavations pursuant to subdivision (b) of this section and pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 4216.2 within the geographic area with which the tribe is traditionally and culturally affiliated.”

Gov. Code Section	Summary of Change(s)	Amended Statute Text*
<u>4216.1(d)</u>	The Board must report to the Legislature on the advantages, barriers, and funding options for the development of a web-based P&D platform for accomplishing the communication processes identified in subdivision (b) and for allowing tribes to view plans for projects and to communicate with plan submitters.	“The board shall report to the Legislature, as part of the report filed pursuant to Section 4216.23, on the advantages, barriers, and funding options for the development of an internet web-based planning and design platform for accomplishing the communication processes identified in subdivision (b) and for allowing tribes to view plans for projects and to communicate with plan submitters.”

* Amended Statute Text in this document was taken from the California Legislative Information website: [Today's Law As Amended: SB 254 Energy \(2025-2026\)](#). Accessed October 2025.

Resources

Dig Safe Act: [CA Gov. Code Section 4216](#)

Underground Safety Board Regulations: [19 CA Code Regs. Sections 4000 – 4501](#)

Contact the Underground Safety Board: digboard@energysafety.ca.gov

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