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## California Underground Facilities Safe Excavation Board

November 9, 2021

Agenda Item No. 8 Information Item – Staff Report

*Idea Register Report 2021*

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### **PRESENTERS**

Tony Marino, Executive Officer

### **SUMMARY**

The Board received 5 new Idea Register submissions for consideration in 2021 for a total of 12 ideas for consideration by the Board.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN**

Strategic Plan Objective: Continue Building a Foundation for Board Operations

### **BACKGROUND**

As part of the Board's Strategic Plan,<sup>1</sup> the Board implemented an Idea Register in 2020 to facilitate discussion of hazards existing in the excavation industry and field ideas for addressing safety concerns through Board action. The Board developed an online form as well as fillable PDF for ease of submission to the Register<sup>2</sup> and received 7 submissions for consideration that took place on November 16, 2020.<sup>3</sup>

### **DISCUSSION**

The Board received 5 Idea Register Submissions between the end of October 2020 and the present, included here with staff summary. Full information of these idea submissions is in Attachment A.

- IR-2020-10-30-008: Incomplete notification of facility information from municipalities.
- IR-2020-11-16-009: Clarification of EPR notification timing and responsiveness to tickets.
- IR-2021-06-28-010: One-call centers should notify the Board of any

<sup>1</sup> [California Underground Facilities Safe Excavation Board, Strategic Plan, Pages 12-16](#)

<sup>2</sup> [June 8, 2020, Agenda Item No. 3, Implementation of the Idea Register Submission Form and the Idea Register](#)

<sup>3</sup> [November 11, 2020, Agenda Item No. 10, 2021 Board Planning](#)

members who cancel their memberships or whose memberships are terminated due to non- payment, and the Board should consider following up with these members.

- IR-2021-08-26-011: Proper grounding of tracer wire and improved underground facility locating technologies can increase locatability of underground facilities.
- IR-2021-09-01-012: Recommend statutory changes to include CA Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as a member of the regional notification centers.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the Board consider the Idea Register submissions from 2020 and 2021 as it considers its planning for the coming year.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Idea Register Submissions 2021 – *IR-2020-10-30-008* to *IR-2021-09-01-012*

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# California Underground Facilities Safe Excavation Board

November 9, 2021

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Attachment A: Idea Register Submissions 2021

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IR-2020-10-30-008

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**Staff Summary:** Incomplete notification of facility information from municipalities.

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**Contributor:** Anthony Headley

**Industry Role:** Excavator

**Organization:** United Contractors

**What is the safety concern?**

When a municipality owns multiple underground infrastructures, is a member of the 811 program, but refuses to market out all of their owned units.

**Under what circumstances does this concern arise?**

When we are pot holing the work area, with the planned excavation, we note some indicators there is a traffic loop, street light, or even a water control pump vault and no markings. The city tells us to just be careful since we have visual knowledge something is present in the area.

**Who does the concern affect?**

Excavators:	Yes	Facility Operators:	Yes
Locators:	Off	Project Owners:	Yes
Engineers:	Off	One Call Centers:	Off
Other:	Yes		

**How are these parties affected by this concern?**

Damaged infrastructure negatively impacts all, one way or another. First and foremost is personal injury.

**How do these parties currently manage this concern?**

Verbal chat only, no markings

**What part/s of Government Code 4216 does this concern relate to?**

4216.3(a)(1)(A)

**What is your idea to address this safety concern?**

Direct DSB investigators to contact the involved agency to educate and enforce this section of 4216

**What organizations do you believe might be willing to help develop or implement your idea?**

Your call

**What do you think is the most appropriate Board action to implement your idea?**

More Education/Outreach/Guidance on Existing Requirements or Resources

**What do you see as the potential benefits of your identified solution?**

Reduced chances of damaged infrastructure

**What do you see as the potential downsides of your identified solution?**

N/A

**What new hazards could be created in pursuing your idea, or what existing hazards could be worsened by your idea?**

N/A

**What data or other information do you think is necessary to make an informed decision on this issue?**

N/A

**Does the required data exist today? If so, please identify potential public data sources.**

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**Staff Summary:** Clarification of EPR notification timing and responsiveness to tickets.

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**Contributor:** Steve Cleaver

**Industry Role:** Facility Operator

**Organization:** Pacific Gas & Electric, Co.

**What is the safety concern?**

This is a compliance concern more than a safety concern. Looking for clarity and consistency on EPR and it's impact on reporting of "late" ticket reporting and accountability across the industry. Maintaining consistent reporting to regulatory bodies of locating and marking activities between all parties (operators & One Call centers) is very important to PG&E currently and likely will be for all operators in the future as the influence of the board and enforcement activities of other regulators grows over time.

**Under what circumstances does this concern arise?**

GC 4216.3(a)(1)(A) requires the utility operator to respond in 1 of 3 ways prior to the legal excavation start date & time. This is specifically targeting the locating and field marking of a facility that establishes a tolerance zone, if one exists. GC 4216.3(c)(1)(A) requires the operator to supply an EPR to the One Call centers prior to the legal excavation start date & time. Due to the lack of connectivity in some areas, delivery of an EPR to a One Call Center may unexpectedly be unreliable or impossible until after the legal excavation start date/time. This connectivity could be due to a software/hardware device issue which may be the responsibility of the operator, or due to lack of service in an area due to a lack of infrastructure. These things may be beyond the control of any operator and impact the timely delivery of an EPR. Looking to have clear and consistent guidance from the board on future reporting and/or enforcement.

**Who does the concern affect?**

Excavators:	Off	Facility Operators:	Yes
Locators:	Off	Project Owners:	Off
Engineers:	Off	One Call Centers:	Yes
Other:	Off		

**How are these parties affected by this concert?**

The transmittal/supply of an EPR from the Operator/Contract Locator to a Once Call Center may give the appearance of a failure to locate & field mark prior to the legal excavation start date/time (which is a safety issue) when it is actually an

indication of communication gaps due to lack of infrastructure (which is not a safety risk, but a communication & compliance issue).

**How do these parties currently manage this concern?**

The requirement for EPR is not yet mandatory or regulated, so no consistent management of the issue exists.

**What part/s of Government Code 4216 does this concern relate to?**

GC 4216.3(a)(1)(A) and GC 4216.3(c)(1)(A)

**What is your idea to address this safety concern?**

Establish clear expectation with all parties about the challenges faces in remote areas with limited connectivity that leads to consistent interpretation and application of the law as this new requirement goes into effect.

**What organizations do you believe might be willing to help develop or implement your idea?**

Utility Operators and excavators who work in remote areas and use mobile devices to complete ticket management activities in the field.

**What do you think is the most appropriate Board action to implement your idea?**

More Education/Outreach/Guidance on Existing Requirements or Resources

**What do you see as the potential benefits of your identified solution?**

Consistent adherence to regulatory requirements and improved communication between operators and excavators when questions arise. (specifically focused on EPR)

**What do you see as the potential downsides of your identified solution?**

I don't know of potential downsides because this is only a suggestion for interpretation and establishing guidelines for consistency.

**What new hazards could be created in pursuing your idea, or what existing hazards could be worsened by your idea?**

None known

**What data or other information do you think is necessary to make an informed decision on this issue?**

How widespread are current connectivity issues across the state and where, and what is the expected future state of these locations with a timeline for resolution?

**Does the required data exist today? If so, please identify potential public data sources.**

I believe it does, but it may be fragmented between various service providers. Not sure if there is a repository for this kind of info.

**Staff Summary:** One-call centers should notify the Board of any members who cancel their memberships or whose memberships are terminated due to non-payment, and the Board should consider following up with these members.

**Contributor:** Ann Diamond & James Wingate

**Industry Role:** One-Call Centers

**Organization:** DigAlert/USA North 811

**What is the safety concern?**

Facility operators that become a member not in good-standing due to non-payment for regional notification invoices or quit membership.

**Under what circumstances does this concern arise?**

When facility operator does not pay their invoice within a timely manner they are sent a letter that they are no longer a member in good standing and terminated.

**Who does the concern affect?**

Excavators:	Yes	Facility Operators:	Yes
Locators:	Off	Project Owners:	Off
Engineers:	Off	One Call Centers:	Yes
Other:	Off		

**How are these parties affected by this concern?**

Excavators would not be aware of the facility operators lines when obtaining a ticket.

Facility operators would not be given notice of excavation near their lines.

One-Call Centers lose expected revenue.

**How do these parties currently manage this concern?**

One-Call Centers cease sending ticket notifications when the operator is terminated

**What part/s of Government Code 4216 does this concern relate to?**

4216.1

**What is your idea to address this safety concern?**

Having a complaint filed with the Board that the member has been terminated for non-payment and/or when they inform the center they want to quit membership. Then the Board can contact the facility operator and inform them they need to be a

member unless they no longer own/maintain a subsurface installation. When information comes from a state agency, it tends to not be dismissed.

**What organizations do you believe might be willing to help develop or implement your idea?**

California Underground Facilities Safe Excavation Board

**What do you think is the most appropriate Board action to implement your idea?**

**What do you see as the potential benefits of your identified solution?**

The Board will know what facility operators are longer members and can determine if the Board fees will need to be paid and can communicate that to the center. Also will inform the facility operator of the requirements of being a member of a regional notification center.

**What do you see as the potential downsides of your identified solution?**

A bit more work for the Board

**What new hazards could be created in pursuing your idea, or what existing hazards could be worsened by your idea?**

None at this time

**What data or other information do you think is necessary to make an informed decision on this issue?**

**Does the required data exist today? If so, please identify potential public data sources.**



**Staff Summary:** Proper grounding of tracer wire and improved underground facility locating technologies can increase locatability of underground facilities.

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**Contributor:** Jeffrey (JP) Peterson

**Industry Role:** Engineer

**Organization:** Copperhead Industries, LLC

**What is the safety concern?**

I am not sure if this is the right format for submitting this to the board but, we are all about Damage Prevention!

Copperhead Industries provides solutions for the accurate, efficient location of underground utilities. Copperhead has developed locating solutions in the water/wastewater, gas, oil and telecommunications industries. Every component in Copperhead's Complete Utility Locating System™ is manufactured in the USA and engineered for durability. The system includes Copperhead® copper-clad steel tracer wire, corrosion-resistant locking connectors, ground rods, secure access points, and easy-to-use pipe and cable locators.

Copperhead has also developed "Best Practices for Installing and Testing Gas Distribution Trace Wire System. Let me know if you would like a copy. We work closely with LDC's, Municipalities, Engineering and Construction Firms to help design the Best Tracer Wire System on the market.

We are the only tracer wire company that takes a Systematic Approach to locating and have gained worldwide attention for our work.

**Under what circumstances does this concern arise?**

Our system when properly installed will allow the locator to accurately and efficiently pinpoint the exact location of the Tracer Wire System. We can guarantee our system for the life of the utility.

**Who does the concern affect?**

Excavators:	Yes	Facility Operators:	Yes
Locators:	Yes	Project Owners:	Yes
Engineers:	Yes	One Call Centers:	Yes
Other:	Off		

**How are these parties affected by this concern?**

When you have the ability to accurately locate your Underground Utility Assets, not only are they protected, but they become easier to locate and assure they are not going to be hit by an excavator.

**How do these parties currently manage this concern?**

The biggest concern is how many unlocatables a utility has because the original system may not have been properly installed. Every tracer wire system must be properly grounded, and always located at the lowest possible frequency to assure that there is no Bleed Off onto neighboring utilities.

**What part/s of Government Code 4216 does this concern relate to?**

Department of Transportation Pipeline Safety Regulations Part 192 - Transportation of Natural and Other Gas by Pipeline.

**What is your idea to address this safety concern?**

As we have been doing for years and the reason we wrote the Best Practices for Installing and Testing Gas Distribution Tracer Wire Systems, we teach classes do presentations and have our system specified on the front end of the job design so we make sure the system is properly installed. If followed, the system will work perfectly for the location of all underground utility assets.

**What organizations do you believe might be willing to help develop or implement your idea?**

DOT, any utility concerned about their underground utility assets and always the various 811 Call Centers around North America.

**What do you think is the most appropriate Board action to implement your idea?**

New Standards

**What do you see as the potential benefits of your identified solution?**

Our system has proven time and time again to be a more accurate and efficient method for the location of all underground utilities. Helps eliminate the unlocatables experienced by every utility.

**What do you see as the potential downsides of your identified solution?**

Lack of knowledge of how taking a systematic approach can be so beneficial. For many years, tracer wire has been put in the ground without proper grounding. Grounding your tracer wire system is what completes the circuit to assure that the tracer wire sys

**What new hazards could be created in pursuing your idea, or what existing hazards could be worsened by your idea?**

The system is simple. The basics of grounding your system to complete a circuit has been around for many many years. It is like disconnecting the ground wire on your light switch, the light go out. It is the same when you do not properly ground your tracer wire system...Unlocatables are the result. A few simple basics make this process very easy to understand.

**What data or other information do you think is necessary to make an informed decision on this issue?**

Talk to all the LDC's, Municipalities, Engineering Firms and Construction Firms that have adopted our system and written it into their specifications, and you will have your answer. The system works and allows a locate to happen in 1/3 the time.

**Does the required data exist today? If so, please identify potential public data sources.**

Yes, our website refers to all the information needed to make an educated decision:

[www.copperheadwire.com](http://www.copperheadwire.com)

**Staff Summary:** Recommend statutory changes to include CA Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as a member of the regional notification centers.

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**Contributor:** Shane Taylor

**Industry Role:** Facility Operator

**Organization:** City of Arroyo Grande

**What is the safety concern?**

Caltrans does not participate in USA 811

**Under what circumstances does this concern arise?**

Every time a planned excavation is made in the Caltrans right of way or where their underground facilities exist.

**Who does the concern affect?**

Excavators:	Yes	Facility Operators:	Yes
Locators:	Yes	Project Owners:	Yes
Engineers:	Yes	One Call Centers:	Yes
Other:	Yes		

**How are these parties affected by this concern?**

Any planned excavation within the right of way or even outside of the Caltrans right of way will not see any locate marks of their facilities.

**How do these parties currently manage this concern?**

I can only answer for The City of Arroyo Grande. We attempt to contact Caltrans to mark but it is hit and miss.

**What part/s of Government Code 4216 does this concern relate to?**

I understand per 4216.1 that the Department of Transportation is not required to be a member, which is what needs to be considered since it is wrong and not safe. They are the largest facility owner in the State with vast networks of underground facilities.

**What is your idea to address this safety concern?**

Amend the Government Code Section to require The Dept of Transportation to be member of USA.

**What organizations do you believe might be willing to help develop or implement your idea?**

**What do you think is the most appropriate Board action to implement your idea?**

Recommend Statutory Changes

**What do you see as the potential benefits of your identified solution?**

This will reduce the number of accidents and damage not to mention the traffic disruption when signals wires are hit and major intersections go black or when water lines or storm water lines are damaged.

**What do you see as the potential downsides of your identified solution?**

I am sure this is a large expenditure to Caltrans to become a member but it is the right thing to do and the safe action to take.

**What new hazards could be created in pursuing your idea, or what existing hazards could be worsened by your idea?**

None

**What data or other information do you think is necessary to make an informed decision on this issue?**

N/A

**Does the required data exist today? If so, please identify potential public data sources.**

N/A