Area of Continual Excavation Ticket Process for Farmers

Excavation work, which includes agricultural activities, has required a "call before you dig" ticket since the 1980's. Following a fatal gas explosion in 2015 caused by deep ripping over a transmission pipeline in Bakersfield, California lawmakers created a one-year Area of Continual Excavation (ACE) ticket available to farmers and certain flood control operators. The goal was to create a safe and less burdensome option to comply with the "call before you dig" law than the normal ticket process. This process will be available July 1, 2020.

THE "CALL BEFORE YOU DIG" PROCESS

Whether you use the new "ACE" ticket or the traditional ticket, follow these steps:

Step 1: Request a Ticket

Call "811" or use an online portal to contact the "one-call" center and request a ticket.

- Online: use www.811express.com/ (Northern California) or newtinb.digalert.org/direct/ (Southern California)

Request either a standard 28-day ticket, or a year-long "ACE" ticket:

- Year-long ACE ticket:
  - Can be requested any time of year that is convenient for the farmer or flood control agency, and is valid for one year from date of issuance
  - Must be renewed within one year if work continues
- Traditional 28-Day Ticket
  - Must be requested at least 2 days prior to excavation, not including the day of the request
  - Must be renewed within 28 days if work continues.

Step 2: Delineate boundaries of work area in white

Delineate the area IN WHITE using methods such as paint, flags, flour, white buckets, or sand bags.

Step 3: Wait two days for facility owners to contact you and mark the area

It's the hardest part!

Step 4a: High priority pipeline? Have an onsite meeting

The facility owner will contact you if there is a "high priority" facility—usually a gas transmission or petroleum pipeline—within 10 feet of the work area.

- For an onsite meeting, have information available about the size, location of facility if known, type of work to be done, and workers authorized to perform work (including any subcontractors).

Step 4b: No high priority pipeline? Request a meeting, or start work!

If the facilities near the work area are not "high priority," either you or the facility owner may initiate contact to discuss how best to stay safe around the line.

FEATURES OF ACE TICKETS OVER TRADITIONAL "CALL BEFORE YOU DIG" TICKETS

ACE tickets will have several advantages over the traditional "call before you dig" ticket

- Good for one year instead of 28 days
- Good for you AND your subcontractors
- If there is a "high priority" facility, the facility owner must send someone to the onsite meeting with knowledge of the location of the facility, such as a superintendent, supervisor, or engineer.
- If you and the facility owner disagree about the location of a "high priority" facility—such as its depth—the facility owner must either provide documentation indicating the facility location or expose the line (you must, of course, have a valid basis for your understanding of the facility location).

NEW RESPONSIBILITIES OF ACE TICKET HOLDERS

The benefits of ACE tickets also come with new responsibilities.

- Be willing to have an onsite meeting with a facility operator if they request one.
- If there is a "high priority" facility, you must be able to describe all your farming activities during the duration of the ticket during the onsite meeting
- If there is a "high priority" facility, you, along with the facility owner, must complete and sign the ACE Agreement Form.
- If there is a "high priority" facility, you must inform everyone working the area, including subcontractors, of the terms of the ACE Agreement Form.

MORE INFORMATION

More information about the "Call Before You Dig" process in general:
https://call811.com/Before-You-Dig

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References:

- California Government Code § 4216.10
- Title 19, California Code of Regulations, §§ 4350, 4351 (pending)
- Title 19, California Code of Regulations, § 4305 (pending)