



Why Utility Locating Alone Isn't Always Enough

FROM THE FIELD • DEREK HOYLE • MARCH 06, 2026

Every project starts with locating. It's a necessary first step and one that no responsible team skips. But locating alone doesn't always provide the certainty a project needs to move forward safely. We see this most often on sites with multiple phases of development, older infrastructure, or a mix of public and private utilities. Even when markings are clear, questions remain—especially around depth, direction, and proximity to planned work.

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That's where problems tend to surface. Crews assume certainty where it doesn't exist, and excavation moves forward without verification.

From the field, we've learned that the most successful projects treat locating as the beginning of the process, not the end. When markings raise questions or when tolerance for error is low, additional verification is what prevents damage.

> This isn't about doing more work than necessary. It's about recognizing when locating data alone doesn't tell the full story.

Damage prevention happens when teams know when to stop, ask the next question, and confirm conditions before digging.

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