



FUCC Color Coding Subcommittee Findings and Recommendations & Position Statement

In the ever more crowded environment of the public rights of way, being able to identify buried utility lines quickly and easily is becoming more and more important for economic and especially safety reasons. The days of only having local water, sewer and telephone service buried in the right of way are long gone. The Color Coding Labeling Subcommittee found that conduit manufactures can now provide conduit in upwards of twelve (12) different solid colors in combination with contrasting stripes and can also imprint a company's name on the product at the same reported price as common gray conduit.

The Committee also found that the American Public Works Association (APWA) has a Guidance Position Statement titled Permanent Buried Line Marking that urges adoption of the Uniform Color Code used for temporarily marking the ground over buried utilities be carried through as a color code for new and replacement permanent utility facilities such as markers, signs, vents, underground cables, pipes and conduits. There are reports of people excavating at the markings anticipating that the utility lines will also be that color which has led to some very dangerous situations. Adoption of the code by the utility industry for use on permanent facilities will provide a commonality that can help reduce worker injury/fatality, minimize damage to facilities and thus provide better service to the recipient.

Other than the Florida Department of Environmental Protection requirement for water and sewer providers to use the color codes of blue for water, green for sewer and purple for reclaimed water as either a solid color pipe such as PVC or black ductile iron with a color stripe there is no requirement for communication, power or gas companies to use any particular color at all. There are a few communication companies that have adopted the use of solid orange conduit, sometimes with a contracting stripe to differentiate particular cable runs, some gas companies have adopted the use of yellow polyethylene pipe wherever possible and some power companies are using red conduit or black piping with a red stripe.

It could be the biggest obstacle for more utility agencies/owners using a color coding for new or replacement installations is simple inertia on the procurement side of companies.

That is why the FUCC Color Coding Subcommittee recommends the Florida Utilities Coordinating Committee be supportive of the APWA Guidance Position Statement titled

Permanent Buried Line Marking and urge all members to advocate at their respective firms to adopt the Uniform Color Code for all new and replacement facilities.

Reference Materials Below



Washington Office

1275 K St., NW, Suite 750

Washington, DC 20005

202-408-9541/Fax 202-408-9542

Guidance Position Statement

Permanent Buried Line Marking

Statement of Purpose

The American Public Works Association (APWA) seeks to inform the public works community, its professionals and practitioners, policy-makers and decision-makers at all levels of government and the public at-large of its stated position on Permanent Buried Line Marking.

Statement of Position

The APWA urges that the predominant color of all new and replacement permanent underground utility line marker signs, sign posts, and buried line vents be in accordance with the APWA Uniform Color Code. The APWA urges that wherever practical, the outside covering of buried cable, pipe, duct, or conduit be colored or color marked in accordance with the APWA Uniform Color Code. The APWA further urges that line owners and manufacturers of underground utility lines, cables, pipes, ducts, and conduits be encouraged to incorporate permanent markings in their products in accordance with the APWA Uniform Color Code. Finally, the APWA urges that United States and Canadian governmental agencies adopt this APWA permanent color marking in their laws, codes of practice and regulations.

Background and Rationale

The APWA, through its Utility and Public Right-of-Way Committee (UPROW), has developed a uniform color code for temporarily marking underground utility lines to enhance worker safety and minimize damage during excavation. Excavators now generally recognize the uniform colors and their value in identifying the nature of subsurface utilities present on job sites. Worker injury or fatality and damage to utility and similar lines can be further minimized if permanent above-ground signs and vents that identify and warn of important underground lines were color coded. Furthermore, the outside covering of some underground utility and similar lines can and have been colored, and recognition of buried utilities exposed during excavation could be greatly enhanced if their outside covering was permanently color coded.

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Utilities and Public Right of Way Committee (UPROW)