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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.

Sponsor

Utilities and Public Right of Way Committee (UPROW)