

TOOLBOX TALKS

Flirting With Disaster-Digging in the Tolerance Zone

Company Name _____

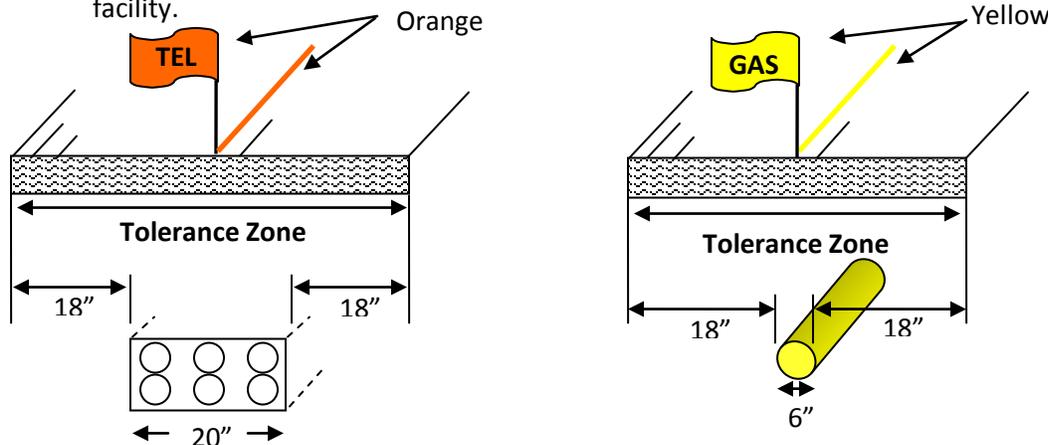
Date _____

Presenter Name _____

Job Site/Project _____

The tolerance zone is the zone to either side of located utility marks. Excavation within this zone should be avoided if possible due to the increased risk of damaging buried facilities. However, many times it is necessary to excavate near or across marked facilities. When excavating in the tolerance zone there are extra precautions you must take to avoid damages.

- The tolerance zone is designated as the width of the facility plus 18" on either side of the facility.



- Do not assume facilities are buried at a specific depth. Changes in grade due to frost, landscaping, or other activities may have changed the depth of facilities from their original installation point.
- Whenever possible, use soft excavation techniques when working in the tolerance zone. These include hand digging, soft digging, pneumatic tools, and vacuum excavation.
- Use caution when using hand tools. Never use pick axes or pointed spades. Use a blunted shovel to loosen dirt, and a regular shovel to remove dirt. Never stab at the soil, use a gentle prying action. Dig at an angle, this will allow the shovel to slide off the surface of a pipe should you hit one.
- Before you use powered or mechanized equipment to excavate within the tolerance zone you must verify the location, type, depth, size, and direction of run of the facility by means of hand dug test holes or vacuum excavation.

