



**WATER
LINE**

**OFFICE OF ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY
UNDERGROUND SAFETY BOARD**

2025 WORKPLAN

JANUARY 2025

DRAFT



For a hard copy of this report, please contact the California Underground Safety Board at the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety at (916) 902-6000. The report may also be accessed on the Board's website: <https://energysafety.ca.gov/who-we-are/undergroundsafetyboard/>.

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

Each year the Underground Safety Board (Board) reviews its past accomplishments and the needs and risks of the industries it regulates to formulate a set of objectives and activities for the coming year. This report highlights these activities for 2025.

THE BOARD

The Board is composed of nine members, seven of whom are appointed by the Governor and one each appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly and the Senate Rules Committee. The Board currently has three vacancies.



Amparo Muñoz,
Chair



Bill Johns,
Vice Chair



Randy Charland



Marshall Johnson



Carl Voss



Dave Sorem

2025 PLAN

The Underground Safety Board (Board) is committed to advancing safety for California’s workforce and the public by fostering open communication and education among excavators and operators, investigating incidents to uncover root causes, and implementing solutions that promote safer practices. For 2025, the Board has prioritized activities that build upon past achievements and address emerging needs, reinforcing a culture of mutual respect and safety knowledge. Activities deferred due to resource or procedural dependencies are noted as “Looking Ahead.”

Develop and Deliver New Educational Toolkits

In 2025, the Board will continue its commitment to support industry by developing new educational toolkits that deliver essential information, best practices, and guidance on excavation safety issues with the goal to improve statutory compliance and enhance understanding among stakeholders. To ensure these materials are effective and impactful, staff will identify trends in stakeholder discussions, solicit ideas from stakeholders, and evaluate stakeholder feedback to proactively develop educational material to address safety concerns, challenges, and educational needs. In addition to stakeholder driven toolkits, lessons learned from underground damage investigations will be leveraged to develop educational material to mitigate identified potential safety risks. Staff will also draw from the Board’s rulemaking activity to create toolkits that not only contain information of new or amended regulations, but also provide resources to industry professionals on how to comply with new laws.

Staff will also continue with the Area of Continual Excavation (ACE) ticket initiative and complete a comprehensive toolkit in 2025 that will be delivered through agricultural associations to increase awareness of ACE ticket availability for agricultural communities.

Improve Education Course Accessibility

In 2024, the Board completed the development of a self-paced online course in English and Spanish. This course provides education on Dig Safe Act requirements for individuals who are found to be in violation of Dig Safe Laws.

In 2025, the Board plans to make the course publicly available, including for operators and excavators who wish to proactively enhance their knowledge of safe excavation practices. Board staff will also develop an outreach plan targeting excavator groups and utility operators that will be launched to promote use of the course. Additionally, plans for delivering onsite and virtual training will be implemented by staff to provide broader accessibility.

Establish a Framework for Coordinated State Education and Outreach

Building on discussions from the 2023 Annual Education and Outreach Meeting, staff conducted a study on industry training in 2024 that gathered data on existing training and education offered across different industry sectors and the current methods of evaluating training effectiveness. Based upon the findings of the study, the Board will facilitate workshops in 2025 to identify high-priority safety concerns, develop education and outreach training based on the collected information, create an action plan for implementation, and establish metrics to determine the effectiveness of the training. This collaboration will help establish success metrics and the development of a strategic improvement plan to enhance statewide education and outreach effectiveness.

Conduct the Annual Education and Outreach Meeting

Reflecting upon the 2024 meeting's insights, the 2025 Annual Education and Outreach Meeting will build on stakeholder feedback to focus on priority safety topics and encourage greater stakeholder participation. Scheduled for September 2025, the meeting will focus on fostering collaborative discussions and aligning education efforts with the needs of excavators and operators.

Develop a Planning and Design Ticket

The Potholing and Planning and Design Committee preliminary work in 2024 will continue to inform standardization of the process for project designers requesting facility information through one-call centers. This standardized approach aims to facilitate timely and accurate responses from utility operators while addressing staffing realities. The 2025 framework will incorporate comprehensive findings from past interactions, ensuring more effective stakeholder input.

Conduct Enforcement Audits

Following advisory letters that were sent to operators in 2023 and the electronic positive response (EPR) audit preparations in 2024, investigative staff will carry out one or more compliance audits in 2025. The audits will encourage adherence to regulations and inform future policy adjustments to increase EPR use.

Develop Broadly Useable Electronic Positive Response

The Board's Ticket Process Committee will continue refining EPR codes to enhance communication between utility operators and excavators. Following sample simulations of communication between operators and excavators presented in late 2024, additional simulations in 2025 will factor in evolving notification center capabilities and moving toward two-way EPR communication implementation.

Develop Safety Standards

The Board will integrate the 2024 draft standards for potholing and unmarked lines with new planning and design guidance. Public feedback in 2025 will allow stakeholders, including non-professional excavators, to contribute to the development of comprehensive safety practices that will remedy identified gaps in the process.

Clarify the Geographic Information System (GIS) Mapping Law

Informed by the 2024 operator GIS survey and subsequent report, the Board will progress toward defining "new subsurface installation" and setting minimum GIS standards. This continued development will establish clear expectations and promote consistent data use across operators.

Expand the "No 811" Pilot Program

Feedback from 2023-2024 "No 811" pilot participants will guide the expansion of the "No 811" investigation process. In 2025, the program will include additional operators and leverage technology to more efficiently conduct comprehensive investigations.

Clarify Area of Notification Information Transfer Requirements

Regulatory language drafted in 2024 to address area of notification information transfer and operator membership termination notices will be finalized and filed in 2025. These regulations will formalize information transfer to help ensure that terminated notification center memberships do not compromise public safety or create situations where areas are not marked prior to excavation.

Onboard New Staff

As of late 2024, with the Underground Infrastructure Directorate (UID) fully staffed, in 2025, UID management will focus on ensuring all staff are completely onboarded through Energy Safety's internal trainings, completion of the online Dig Safe Act course, and other relevant opportunities.

Develop New Board Member Orientation Program

In anticipation of new appointments, staff will work with Board members and the Board's attorney to finalize an onboarding program that equips new members with essential information, facilitating effective board service from the outset.

Looking Ahead: Develop a Youth Education Program

To address the lack of public awareness, staff will begin researching methods for teaching targeted age groups, setting the groundwork for an educational program aimed at fostering a culture of safety awareness among younger generations.

Looking Ahead: Damage Notification Process Improvements

Staff will continue to review damage reporting practices, leveraging findings from the "No 811" pilot to modernize reporting regulations and enhance investigation readiness.

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2025 MEETING SCHEDULE

February 10–11: Sacramento

April 14–15: Southern California

July 14–15: Sacramento

September 8–9: Southern California

November 17–18: Sacramento

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