

Gopher State One Call Damage Prevention Meeting 2021 Guide



Welcome to the 2021 Gopher State One Call Damage Prevention meeting.

The goal of this meeting and course modules is to inform locators, utility operators and excavators about underground utility safety protocols and best practices, and to ensure that safety continues to be the No. 1 goal across Minnesota's damage prevention industry.

Use this guide to follow along with the video modules. Feel free to print it in order to take notes and jot down any comments or questions as you think of them.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. GSOC Introduction ... Page 3**
- 2. Safety & 2021 Goals ... Page 4**
- 3. 2020 Ticket Recap ... Page 5**
- 4. Ticket Types & Use of Meet Tickets ... Page 6**
- 5. Expectations, White Markings & Helpful Tips ... Page 8**
- 6. Locate Request Process Changes ... Page 10**
- 7. Damage Prevention Meeting Recap ... Page 12**

MODULE 1 OF 7: GSOC INTRODUCTION

What is Gopher State One Call?

It is the one call notification system established to act as a communication link between underground facility operators, homeowners and excavators in the state of Minnesota.

When was GSOC established?

In 1987, Minnesota enacted damage prevention legislation in the form of State Statutes Ch216D. GSOC accepted its first locate request on **October 1, 1988**.

- The statute included the establishment of a one call notification center
- The notification center statute came to be due to a tragic fire caused by a hazardous liquid pipeline in Mounds View, Minnesota, that resulted in two deaths, severe injuries and more than \$250,000 in property damage in 1986.

What does GSOC do?

- Collects information from anyone who is planning to excavate
- Transmits information to facility operators who may have underground facilities near the excavation site
- In 2020 alone, GSOC processed 941,358 tickets

Once the information is transmitted, facility operators then:

- Mark underground facilities with paint or flags
- Respond to the ticket electronically through GSOC's positive response site
- Clear the work area

What does GSOC NOT do?

- Physically locate underground facilities
- Settle disputes between operators and excavators
- Maintain a database of facility locations or types
- Repair damages (if a utility is damaged, please contact the utility company to have it repaired)

MODULE 2 OF 7: SAFETY & 2021 GOALS

GSOC resources

- GSOC handbook includes:
 - How to use GSOC
 - Details on:
 - Private facilities
 - Excavator responsibilities
 - Facility operator responsibilities
 - Ticket types
 - Marking instructions
 - Minnesota state law Chapter 216D (highlighted in blue)
- GSOC website: gopherstateonecall.org
 - For the handbook, documents and other guides
 - [Gopherstateonecall.org](http://gopherstateonecall.org) → Resources tab → Downloads (to download digital copies)
 - [Gopherstateonecall.org](http://gopherstateonecall.org) → Promotional Items tab (to order printed materials)

Safety

- Our goal in 2021 is ZERO hits.
- The number of utility hits in Minnesota has not decreased over the past five years
- Let's work together to make 2021 our **safest year yet**

Underground safety: a shared responsibility

- Communication is the backbone of what GSOC does and what we stand for
- Without it, the industry's safety and livelihood are at stake
- The extra time taken to speak to your team, ask questions and take precautions while submitting tickets is what keeps the public safe and underground utilities intact

Important reminder: **Underground safety is a shared responsibility.**

We are here to remind you of that responsibility. Avoid taking shortcuts so mistakes don't happen.

MODULE 3 OF 7: 2020 TICKET RECAP

Ticket types

Minnesota State Law Ch216D excavation ticket types:

- Normal (Routine)
- Meet
- Emergency

2020 ticket data

- 941,358 total tickets were completed in 2020
 - 793,639 Normal
 - 19,131 Meet
 - 15,033 Emergency
- 2020 was the busiest year yet for tickets submitted
- May was the busiest month of 2020, with 124,000 tickets submitted
- We had a record six months with more than 100,000 tickets submitted per month

Ticket processing

There are two ways to submit, update and look at your tickets online. You also can review your positive response updates on your mobile device while in the field. Using these tools can help you be more efficient and productive in your daily work.

- Gopherstateonecall.org
- The GSOC mobile app

ITIC system

- File requests 24/7
- Save time by creating profiles
- Receive email confirmation of tickets

Tips for ticket submission

- Every single ticket is checked. If there is something that needs to be corrected, we will call you.
- Please work carefully when submitting your ticket. (Our mapping system will help you with that.)
- The area you are drawing needs to include all relevant information and totally encompass the area
- When you take the time to make sure you are submitting tickets accurately, everyone benefits

MODULE 4 OF 7: TICKET TYPES & USE OF MEET TICKETS

Types of tickets

Excavation tickets:

- Normal
 - Most common ticket type
 - Require 48-hour notice prior to excavation, not including weekends and holiday
 - Are good for up to 14 calendar days from the start date/time on the ticket, unless the locate markings become obscured or obliterated
 - Must be remarked/updated every 14 days
- Meet
 - Use to request that the facility operator to physically meet at the excavation site
 - Use when it is difficult to precisely define the location of the excavation site in a Normal locate request
 - Use when it is difficult to define the excavation site of a locate request
 - Use for projects
 - Use in inclement weather
 - While they may seem more time-consuming up front, Meet tickets help eliminate duplication of locate resources and cut back on time in the long haul
 - Meet tickets may eliminate the need for Update tickets
 - Excessive update tickets causes stress on locating resources
 - Overall, Meet tickets tend to result in better quality and more timely locates
 - This is the third year GSOC has stressed the use of Meet tickets
- Emergency
 - Emergency locates are used for conditions that “pose a clear and immediate danger of life or health, or significant loss of property”
 - GSOC does not determine whether an emergency condition exists
 - If a ticket is submitted to GSOC as an emergency, we have no choice but to process it as such.
 - There are two types of emergency tickets: Immediate and Scheduled.
 - Immediate emergency examples:
 - Unforeseen excavation necessary in order to prevent a condition that poses clear and immediate danger to life or health
 - Excavation required in order to prevent significant and immediate property damage

- Repair of an existing unstable condition that may result in an emergency
- If there is a release of flammable, toxic or corrosive gas or liquid, or a dangerous situation is created, follow these steps:
 1. **CALL 911 FIRST**
 2. Contact the facility operator involved in the emergency
 3. Contact GSOC
- Scheduled emergency examples:
 - Leaking water main that will be fixed the next morning.
 - Power pole being replaced the next day
 - Water well repair

Non-excavation tickets:

- Owner inquiry
- Non-excavation
- Engineering/Pre-con Meet
- Boundary Survey

Private facilities

Private underground facilities **DO NOT** get marked by facility operators.

When a property owner or tenant has any type of private underground facility, they are responsible to locate those facilities or hire someone to locate them.

Find a list of private locators:

- Page 8 of the GSOC handbook
- Gopherstateonecall.org → Resources tab → Industry Directory → Private Facility Locators

MODULE 5 OF 7: EXPECTATIONS, WHITE MARKINGS & HELPFUL TIPS

Locator and operator expectations:

- Call if late
- Use extended start time
- Attend meets
- Include updated contact information on tickets
- Provide maps if requested
- Locate on time
- Provide abandoned facility information
- Enter positive response

Excavator expectations:

- Perform white marking before submitting locate request
- Provide start date and time
- Provide precise ticket information (DO NOT use “mark entire lot”)
- Provide field contact cell phone number
- Use appropriate ticket type
- Review positive response

White markings

White markings of the excavation site are required for all proposed excavation by Minnesota State Statute 216D.

- It is the excavator’s responsibility to mark the proposed excavation area in white, by using white paint or white flags (or both)
- Make sure that you white line before you submit a ticket
- White marking is not only the law, but it allows locators to quickly identify the area to locate
- White lining will always be a point of emphasis—because there will always be excavators who are not doing it

Locator and excavator tips

These tips will help keep communication lines open and jobs running more smoothly.

Tip #1: Inform customers and homeowners

Excavators and contractors, please inform your customers or homeowners that locators will be coming out to mark the buried facilities prior to excavation. Many locators are running into upset homeowners, who are unaware of them being on-site.

Tip #2: Start tickets later in the week

Starting your tickets on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday instead of Monday and Tuesday might help spread out the locate demand. You can still enter tickets all in one day, but spread out the excavation dates to give locators more time. Monday and Tuesday are normally very busy.

Tip #3: Update field contact information

Excavators must have updated field contact information, meaning a cell phone number that you have access to in the field. If you do not provide this number, the locators may be unable to reach you with questions, comments or concerns. In these situations, they may have to guess and spend extra time trying to figure out who to track down.

Tip #4: Always check positive response

Always check online to confirm the positive responses on your ticket. Don't assume that locates have been met by the legal timeline. Make sure you communicate in order to avoid a damage. If there are marks missing, pick up the phone and contact the locator to see when locates will be completed.

Tip #5: Mark when using hand tools

GSOC advises you that, although hand tools are exempt from the requirement to contact GSOC before you excavate, it is highly recommended for you to have underground facilities marked even when using hand tools. The use of hand tools may pose a threat to you and others. Examples of hand tool projects include: tent stakes, anchor bolts, form pins, metal probes, survey stakes, hand augers, political signs and real estate signs.

MODULE 6 OF 7: LOCATE REQUEST PROCESS CHANGES

Locate request process changes for 2021

Targeted effective date for all changes is **April 1, 2021**. The changes apply to both web-submitted and call center requests.

Dynamic high-volume ticket alert

During these high-volume ticket times, it is recommended that you extend your requested start date and time out one-half to one full day. This will allow additional time for locators to mark your site.

- 11 counties affected:
 - Hennepin
 - Dakota
 - Ramsey
 - Washington
 - Anoka
 - St. Louis
 - Olmsted
 - Scott
 - Wright
 - Carver
 - Stearns
- Mondays and Tuesdays
- Mid-April to mid-October

Use of Meet tickets for long duration of work

GSOC recommends the use of a Meet ticket if there is a long duration of work in a Normal ticket.

- Use for long duration of work in Normal tickets
- Use for projects completed in phases
- Use for projects lasting more than a month
- Provides increased communication
- Provides greater efficiency for locators
- During the locate request process, you will be prompted to request a Meet ticket if your duration of work is longer than one month. You will be able to revert back to a Normal ticket if you so choose.

Update tickets

The Update ticket process will change so that on the second update request for the same ticket, the marking instructions will be cleared, and new marking instructions will need to be entered.

- New marking instructions required on second update request
- New ticket number assigned
- New number can be tracked back to original request

White lining responses

White markings are required by law and increase the efficiency of locators by clearly showing where they need to locate. In order to encourage white lining, you will now need to respond in further detail to this question when you submit a locate request.

- If YES, describe how markings are done
- If NO, describe why you have not done so
- Responses are automatically entered into ticket

“Mark entire lot” instructions

If you state, “Mark Entire Lot,” or similar language, on your locate request, you will be prompted to provide more precise marking instructions. Precise marking instructions enable locators to more quickly identify the area to be marked and reduce unnecessary markings.

*Remember, these five process changes are scheduled to take effect **April 1, 2021.***

Stay up to date on these changes and other damage prevention news by following Gopher State One Call on social media or visiting the News and Events page at gopherstateonecall.org. You can also find GSOC contact information on the website under the Resources tab.

MODULE 7 OF 7: 2021 DAMAGE PREVENTION MEETING RECAP

2020 tickets

- 2020 was Gopher State One Call's busiest year yet, with 941,358 total tickets
- 83.1 percent of those tickets were submitted online
- We also had a record six months with more than 100,000 tickets submitted per month
- While numbers continue to be high, the number of utility hits has not decreased over the past five years
- We all must work together to ensure safe digging

White lining basics

- White lining is required by law in Minnesota
- You must mark your proposed excavation area in white prior to submitting a locate request
- White markings also help locators by clearly showing where they need to locate
- As of April 1, 2021, you will need to either describe your white markings or disclose why you have not used them whenever you submit a locate request

Meet tickets

Gopher State One Call recommends using a Meet ticket:

- When the excavation area is difficult to define
- For projects. This will help locators possibly locate ahead of where you are excavating and eliminates the need to have multiple tickets updated if plans change.
- In inclement weather. In winter or when outdoor conditions are unpredictable, a Meet ticket can help locators and excavators stay on the same page. This ensures markings are accurate and fresh.
- As of April 1, 2021, when you submit a locate request, you will be prompted to use a Meet ticket if the duration of work is longer than one month.

Communication

Remember, communication is the backbone of what GSOC does and what we stand for. Without it, the industry's safety and livelihood are at stake. Take extra time to speak to your team, ask questions and take precautions while submitting tickets. Together we can keep the public safe and underground utilities intact.

Expectations

Gopher State One Call expects locators and operators to:

- Call if they are going to be late
- Use extended start time
- Attend meets

- Provide updated contact information on tickets
- Provide maps if they are requested
- Locate on time
- Provide abandoned facility information
- Enter positive response

We expect excavators to:

- Perform white markings before submitting the locate request
- Provide a start date and time. Give more time if possible.
- Provide precise ticket information – DO NOT use “mark entire lot”
- Provide a field contact cell phone number
- Use the appropriate ticket type, especially when dealing with Normal vs. Meet
- Review positive responses

You've now completed the 2021 Gopher State One Call Damage Prevention modules.

Thank you for your time and commitment to damage prevention and keeping Minnesota safe. Here at Gopher State One Call, it is our greatest duty to connect Minnesota for safe digging. Let's work together again in 2021 to have the safest year yet.

