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**HOUSE BILL 2979**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2018 Regular Session**

**By** Representative Appleton

AN ACT Relating to adopting new requirements for locating underground facilities, including positive response, minimum marking standards, adopting a new process for coordinating large projects, and requiring new and replacement facilities to be locatable; amending RCW 19.122.030, 19.122.035, 19.122.040, 19.122.050, 19.122.055, and 19.122.130; reenacting and amending RCW 19.122.020; adding a new section to chapter 19.122 RCW; and prescribing penalties.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 19.122.020 and 2011 c 263 s 2 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Bar hole" means a hole made in the soil or pavement with a hand-operated bar for the specific purpose of testing the subsurface atmosphere with a combustible gas indicator.

(2) "Business day" means any day other than Saturday, Sunday, or a legal local, state, or federal holiday.

(3) "Commission" means the utilities and transportation commission.

(4) "Damage" includes the substantial weakening of structural or lateral support of an underground facility, penetration, impairment, or destruction of any underground protective coating, housing, or other protective device, or the severance, partial or complete, of any underground facility to the extent that the project owner or the affected facility operator determines that repairs are required.

(5) "Emergency" means any condition constituting a clear and present danger to life or property, or a customer service outage.

(6) "End user" means any utility customer or consumer of utility services or commodities provided by a facility operator.

(7) "Equipment operator" means an individual conducting an excavation.

(8) "Excavation" and "excavate" means any operation, including the installation of signs, in which earth, rock, or other material on or below the ground is moved or otherwise displaced by any means.

(9) "Excavation confirmation code" means a code or ticket issued by a one-number locator service for the site where an excavation is planned. The code must be accompanied by the date and time it was issued.

(10) "Excavator" means any person who engages directly in excavation.

(11) "Facility operator" means any person who owns an underground facility or is in the business of supplying any utility service or commodity for compensation. "Facility operator" does not include a utility customer who owns a service lateral that terminates at a facility operator's main utility line.

(12) "Gas" means natural gas, flammable gas, or toxic or corrosive gas.

(13) "Hazardous liquid" means:

(a) Petroleum, petroleum products, or anhydrous ammonia as those terms are defined in 49 C.F.R. Part 195 as in effect on March 1, 1998;

(b) Carbon dioxide; and

(c) Other substances designated as hazardous by the secretary of transportation and incorporated by reference by the commission by rule.

(14) "Identified but unlocatable underground facility" means an underground facility which has been identified but cannot be located with reasonable accuracy.

(15) "Large project" means a project that exceeds seven hundred linear feet.

(16) "Locatable underground facility" means an underground facility which can be marked with reasonable accuracy.

(17) "Marking" means the use of stakes, paint, or other clearly identifiable materials to show the field location of underground facilities, in accordance with the current color code standard of the American public works association. Markings shall include identification letters indicating the specific type of the underground facility.

(18) "Notice" or "notify" means contact in person or by telephone or other electronic method, and, with respect to contact of a one-number locator service, also results in the receipt of a valid excavation confirmation code.

(19) "One-number locator service" means a service through which a person can notify facility operators and request marking of underground facilities.

(20) "Person" means an individual, partnership, franchise holder, association, corporation, the state, a city, a county, a town, or any subdivision or instrumentality of the state, including any unit of local government, and its employees, agents, or legal representatives.

(21) "Pipeline" or "pipeline system" means all or parts of a pipeline facility through which hazardous liquid or gas moves in transportation, including, but not limited to, line pipe, valves, and other appurtenances connected to line pipe, pumping units, fabricated assemblies associated with pumping or compressor units, metering and delivery stations and fabricated assemblies therein, and breakout tanks. "Pipeline" or "pipeline system" does not include process or transfer pipelines.

(22) "Pipeline company" means a person or entity constructing, owning, or operating a pipeline for transporting hazardous liquid or gas. "Pipeline company" does not include:

(a) Distribution systems owned and operated under franchise for the sale, delivery, or distribution of natural gas at retail; or

(b) Excavation contractors or other contractors that contract with a pipeline company.

(23) "Reasonable accuracy" means location within twenty-four inches of the outside dimensions of both sides of an underground facility.

(24) "Service lateral" means an underground water, stormwater, or sewer facility located in a public right-of-way or utility easement that connects an end user's building or property to a facility operator's underground facility, and terminates beyond the public right-of-way or utility easement.

(25) "Transfer pipeline" means a buried or aboveground pipeline used to carry hazardous liquid between a tank vessel or transmission pipeline and the first valve inside secondary containment at a facility, provided that any discharge on the facility side of the first valve will not directly impact waters of the state. "Transfer pipeline" includes valves and other appurtenances connected to the pipeline, pumping units, and fabricated assemblies associated with pumping units. "Transfer pipeline" does not include process pipelines, pipelines carrying ballast or bilge water, transmission pipelines, or tank vessel or storage tanks.

(26) "Transmission pipeline" means a pipeline that transports hazardous liquid or gas within a storage field, or transports hazardous liquid or gas from an interstate pipeline or storage facility to a distribution main or a large volume hazardous liquid or gas user, or operates at a hoop stress of twenty percent or more of the specified minimum yield strength.

(27) "Underground facility" means any item buried or placed below ground for use in connection with the storage or conveyance of water, sewage, electronic, telephonic or telegraphic communications, cablevision, electric energy, petroleum products, gas, gaseous vapors, hazardous liquids, or other substances and including but not limited to pipes, sewers, conduits, cables, valves, lines, wires, manholes, attachments, and those parts of poles or anchors that are below ground. This definition does not include pipelines as defined in subsection (21) of this section, but does include distribution systems owned and operated under franchise for the sale, delivery, or distribution of natural gas at retail.

(28) "Unlocatable underground facility" means, subject to the provisions of RCW 19.122.030, an underground facility that cannot be marked with reasonable accuracy using available information to designate the location of an underground facility. "Unlocatable underground facility" includes, but is not limited to, service laterals, storm drains, and nonconductive and nonmetallic underground facilities that do not contain trace wires.

(29) "Utility easement" means a right held by a facility operator to install, maintain, and access an underground facility or pipeline.

(30) "Noninvasive methods" means methods that do not damage the facility, and may include:

(a) Hand digging when practical, soft digging, and vacuum excavation methods; or

(b) With the approval of the facility owner or operator:

(i) Pneumatic hand tools or other mechanical methods; and

(ii) Other technical methods that may be developed.

(31) "Positive response" means that a facility operator provides electronic notification to the one-number locator service in response to a locate request.

(32) "Replacement" means the portion of a new underground facility that is installed, by open cut or trenchless methods, between connection points, such as structures in replacement of an existing underground facility. "Replacement" does not include a spot repair.

(33) "Soft digging" means removal of soils that have been preloosened by noninvasive methods.

**Sec.**  RCW 19.122.030 and 2011 c 263 s 4 are each amended to read as follows:

(1)(a) Unless exempted under RCW 19.122.031, before commencing any excavation, an excavator must mark the boundary of the excavation area with white paint applied on the ground of the worksite, then provide notice of the scheduled commencement of excavation to all facility operators through a one-number locator service.

(b) If boundary marking required by (a) of this subsection is infeasible, an excavator must communicate directly with affected facility operators to ensure that the boundary of the excavation area is accurately identified.

(2)(a) An excavator must provide the notice required by subsection (1) of this section to a one-number locator service not less than two business days and not more than ten business days before the scheduled date for commencement of excavation, unless otherwise agreed by the excavator and facility operators.

(b) If an excavator intends to work at multiple sites or at a large project, the excavator must ((~~take reasonable steps to confer~~)) include on the locate notice a date, no sooner than the second business day, time, and place for a meeting with facility operators to make arrangements that enable ((~~them~~)) the facility operators to locate underground facilities reasonably in advance of the start of excavation for each phase of the work. The meeting date is the date of notice for the purpose of compliance with this subsection. In the event that the facility operator does not attend the required meeting, it is the facility operator's responsibility to contact the excavator.

(3) Upon receipt of the notice provided for in subsection (1) of this section, a facility operator must, with respect to:

(a) The facility operator's locatable underground facilities, provide the excavator with reasonably accurate information by marking their location. All marks shall indicate the name or initials of the facility operator, and when known, the best available description including width, if greater than two inches, and the quantity;

(b) The facility operator's unlocatable or identified but unlocatable underground facilities, provide the excavator with available information as to their location; ((~~and~~))

(c) Service laterals, designate their presence or location, if the service laterals:

(i) Connect end users to the facility operator's main utility line; and

(ii) Are within a public right-of-way or utility easement and the boundary of the excavation area identified under subsection (1) of this section; and

(d) The one-number locator service, beginning January 1, 2021, provide positive response status. The one-number locator service must then provide the excavator with the status of the locate request.

(4)(a) A facility operator must provide positive response status information to an excavator pursuant to subsection (3) of this section no later than two business days after the receipt of the notice provided for in subsection (1) of this section or before excavation commences, at the option of the facility operator, unless otherwise agreed by the parties. If the positive response status is not complete within two business days, a final status update is required upon completion.

(b) A facility operator complying with subsection (3)(b) and (c) of this section may do so in a manner that includes any of the following methods:

(i) Placing within a proposed excavation area a triangular mark at the main utility line pointing at the building, structure, or property in question, indicating the presence of an unlocatable or identified but unlocatable underground facility, including a service lateral;

(ii) Arranging to meet an excavator at a worksite to provide available information about the location of service laterals; or

(iii) Providing copies of the best reasonably available records by electronic message, mail, facsimile, or other delivery method.

(c) A facility operator's good faith attempt to comply with subsection (3)(b) and (c) of this section:

(i) Constitutes full compliance with the requirements of this section, and no person may be found liable for damages or injuries that may result from such compliance, apart from liability for arranging for repairs or relocation as provided in RCW 19.122.050(2); and

(ii) Does not constitute any assertion of ownership or operation of a service lateral by the facility operator.

(d) An end user is responsible for determining the location of a service lateral on their property or a service lateral that they own. Nothing in this section may be interpreted to require an end user to subscribe to a one-number locator service or to locate a service lateral within a right-of-way or utility easement.

(5) An excavator must not excavate until all known facility operators have marked or provided information regarding underground facilities as provided in this section.

(6)(a) Once marked by a facility operator, an excavator is responsible for maintaining the accuracy of the facility operator's markings of underground facilities for the lesser of:

(i) Forty-five calendar days from the date that the excavator provided notice to a one-number locator service pursuant to subsection (1) of this section; or

(ii) The duration of the project.

(b) An excavator that makes repeated requests for location of underground facilities due to its failure to maintain the accuracy of a facility operator's markings as required by this subsection (6) may be charged by the facility operator for services provided.

(c) A facility operator's markings of underground utilities expire forty-five calendar days from the date that the excavator provided notice to a one-number locator service pursuant to subsection (1) of this section. For excavation occurring after that date, an excavator must provide additional notice to a one-number locator service pursuant to subsection (1) of this section.

(7) An excavator has the right to receive reasonable compensation from a facility operator for costs incurred by the excavator if the facility operator does not locate its underground facilities in accordance with the requirements specified in this section.

(8) A facility operator has the right to receive reasonable compensation from an excavator for costs incurred by the facility operator if the excavator does not comply with the requirements specified in this section.

(9) A facility operator is not required to comply with subsection (4) of this section with respect to service laterals conveying only water if their presence can be determined from other visible water facilities, such as water meters, water valve covers, and junction boxes in or adjacent to the boundary of an excavation area identified under subsection (1) of this section.

(10) If an excavator discovers underground facilities that are not identified, the excavator must cease excavating in the vicinity of the underground facilities and immediately notify the facility operator ((~~or~~)) and a one-number locator service. If an excavator discovers identified but unlocatable underground facilities, the excavator must notify the facility operator and the one-number locator service. Upon notification by a one-number locator service or an excavator, a facility operator must ((~~allow for~~)) map or record and mark the location of the uncovered portion of an underground facility identified by the excavator, ((~~and may~~)) or accept verifiable location information from the excavator for ((~~marking of the underground facility~~)) future one-number locate requests. If an excavator discovers and damages an identified but unlocatable facility, the excavator shall proceed pursuant to RCW 19.122.050.

**Sec.**  RCW 19.122.035 and 2011 c 263 s 7 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) After a pipeline company has been notified by an excavator pursuant to RCW 19.122.033 that excavation will uncover any portion of the pipeline company's pipeline, the pipeline company shall ensure that the pipeline section in the vicinity of the excavation is examined for damage prior to being reburied.

(2) Immediately upon receiving information of third-party damage to a hazardous liquid pipeline, the company that operates the pipeline shall terminate the flow of hazardous liquid in that pipeline until it has visually inspected the pipeline. After visual inspection, the pipeline company shall determine whether the damaged pipeline section should be replaced or repaired, or whether it is safe to resume pipeline operation. Immediately upon receiving information of third-party damage to a gas pipeline, the pipeline company shall conduct a visual inspection of the pipeline to determine whether the flow of gas through that pipeline should be terminated, and whether the damaged pipeline should be replaced or repaired. A record of the pipeline company's inspection report and test results shall be provided to the commission, consistent with reporting requirements under 49 C.F.R. Parts 191 and 195, Subpart B.

(3) Pipeline companies shall immediately notify local first responders and the department of ecology of any reportable release of a hazardous liquid from a pipeline. Pipeline companies shall immediately notify local first responders and the commission of any blowing gas leak from a gas pipeline that has ignited or represents a probable hazard to persons or property. Pipeline companies shall take all appropriate steps to ensure the public safety in the event of a release of hazardous liquid or gas under this subsection.

(4) No damaged pipeline may be buried until it is inspected by the facility operator, repaired, or relocated. The pipeline company shall arrange for repairs or relocation of a damaged pipeline as soon as is practical or may permit the excavator to do necessary repairs or relocation at a mutually acceptable price.

**Sec.**  RCW 19.122.040 and 2011 c 263 s 8 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Project owners shall indicate in bid or contract documents the existence of underground facilities known by the project owner to be located within the proposed area of excavation. The following are deemed to be changed or differing site conditions:

(a) An underground facility not identified as required by this chapter or other provision of law; or

(b) An underground facility not located, as required by this chapter or other provision of law, by the project owner, facility operator, or excavator if the project owner or excavator is also a facility operator.

(2) An excavator shall use reasonable care to avoid damaging underground facilities. An excavator must:

(a) Use noninvasive methods to determine the precise location of underground facilities which have been marked;

(b) Plan the excavation to avoid damage to or minimize interference with underground facilities in and near the excavation area; and

(c) Provide such support for underground facilities in and near the construction area, including during backfill operations, as may be reasonably necessary for the protection of such facilities.

(3) If an underground facility is damaged and such damage is the consequence of the failure to fulfill an obligation under this chapter, the party failing to perform that obligation is liable for any damages. Any clause in an excavation contract which attempts to allocate liability, or requires indemnification to shift the economic consequences of liability, that differs from the provisions of this chapter is against public policy and unenforceable. Nothing in this chapter prevents the parties to an excavation contract from contracting with respect to the allocation of risk for changed or differing site conditions.

(4) In any action brought under this section, the prevailing party is entitled to reasonable attorneys' fees.

**Sec.**  RCW 19.122.050 and 2011 c 263 s 9 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) An excavator who, in the course of excavation, contacts or damages an underground facility shall notify the facility operator and a one-number locator service, and report the damage as required under RCW 19.122.053. If the damage causes an emergency condition, the excavator causing the damage shall also alert the appropriate local public safety agencies and take all appropriate steps to ensure the public safety. No damaged underground facility may be buried until it is inspected by the facility operator, repaired, or relocated.

(2) A facility operator notified in accordance with subsection (1) of this section shall arrange for repairs or relocation as soon as is practical, or permit the excavator to do necessary repairs or relocation at a mutually acceptable price.

**Sec.**  RCW 19.122.055 and 2011 c 263 s 10 are each amended to read as follows:

(1)(a) Any excavator who fails to notify a one-number locator service and causes damage to a hazardous liquid or gas underground facility is subject to a civil penalty of not more than ten thousand dollars for each violation.

(b) The civil penalty in this subsection may also be imposed on any excavator who violates RCW 19.122.090.

(2) Any excavator who fails to notify a one-number locator service and causes damage to an underground facility other than a hazardous liquid or gas underground facility is subject to a civil penalty of not more than one thousand dollars for an initial violation, and not more than five thousand dollars for each subsequent violation within a three-year period.

(3) All civil penalties recovered under this section must be deposited into the damage prevention account created in RCW 19.122.160.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 19.122 RCW to read as follows:

As of January 1, 2020, all newly constructed and replacement underground facilities shall be installed so that they are locatable by a common, accessible, and proven method at the time they enter service.

**Sec.**  RCW 19.122.130 and 2017 c 20 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The commission must contract with a statewide, nonprofit entity whose purpose is to reduce damages to underground and above ground facilities, promote safe excavation practices, and review complaints of alleged violations of this chapter. The contract must not obligate funding by the commission for activities performed by the nonprofit entity or the safety committee under this section.

(2) The contracting entity must create a safety committee to:

(a) Advise the commission and other state agencies, the legislature, and local governments on best practices and training to prevent damage to underground utilities, and policies to enhance worker and public safety; and

(b) Review complaints alleging violations of this chapter involving practices related to underground facilities.

(3)(a) The safety committee will consist of thirteen members, who must be nominated by represented groups and appointed by the contracting entity to staggered three-year terms. The safety committee must include representatives of:

(i) Local governments;

(ii) A natural gas utility subject to regulation under Titles 80 and 81 RCW;

(iii) Contractors;

(iv) Excavators;

(v) An electric utility subject to regulation under Title 80 RCW;

(vi) A consumer-owned utility, as defined in RCW 19.27A.140;

(vii) A pipeline company;

(viii) The insurance industry;

(ix) The commission; and

(x) A telecommunications company.

(b) The safety committee may pass bylaws and provide for those organizational processes that are necessary to complete the safety committee's tasks.

(4) The safety committee must meet at least once every three months.

(5) The safety committee may review complaints of alleged violations of this chapter involving practices related to underground facilities. Any person may bring a complaint to the safety committee regarding an alleged violation occurring on or after January 1, 2013.

(6) To review complaints of alleged violations, the safety committee must appoint at least three and not more than five members as a review committee. The review committee must include ((~~the same number of~~)) members representing excavators and facility operators. ((~~One member representing facility operators must also be a representative of a pipeline company or a natural gas utility subject to regulation under Titles 80 and 81 RCW. The review committee must also include a member representing the insurance industry.~~))

(7) Before reviewing a complaint alleging a violation of this chapter, the review committee must notify the person making the complaint and the alleged violator of its review and of the opportunity to participate.

(8) The safety committee may provide written notification to the commission, with supporting documentation, that a person has likely committed a violation of this chapter, and recommend remedial action that may include a penalty amount, training, or education to improve public safety, or some combination thereof.

**--- END ---**