



UTILITY LOCATING FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions...

1. What is “One Call” Service?

“One Call” has become almost a generic name for organizations that coordinate utility locating services. In many cities across North America there are many service organizations such as “One Call”, “Miss Utility”, “Utility Notification Center”, etc. These organizations are available to assist you with getting the local utility companies to mark where their utility lines are buried on your property or leading to your property. Utilities need to be located before you dig or excavate to avoid possible damage to the utility lines or injury to yourself. (In many municipalities it is law that you contact these organizations before you dig.)

One Call organizations usually do not provide the locating service themselves. These service organizations have utility companies (“Members”) who have agreed to dispatch a One Call Utility Locator to mark their services when they receive a service order, referred to as a “Ticket”, from One Call. In some areas not all of the utility companies have agreements with the One Call service. You should confirm with your local One Call service which utility companies will be dispatched. You should personally contact any utility companies that are not Members of your local One Call service organization to come out and mark their utilities.

On March 10, 2005, in the United States the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) approved the use of 811 as a national call-before-you-dig telephone number, and the Commission ordered that 811 be operational two years from publication of its designation in the Federal Register.

2. Who does a One Call Utility Locator work for?

A standard utility locator may work for one specific utility company or may be an independent company contracted to provide standard utility locating for one or a number of utility companies. Depending on the arrangements your local One Call Service has with their Members one or more standard locators may be dispatched to do the locates.

3. Is there a cost for One Call Locating?

In many locations the cost of the One Call utility locating service is paid for by its utility company Members. In some areas there is a cost for this service. This can be confirmed by calling your local One Call service.

4. What lines do One Call Utility Locators mark?

Generally most standard utility locators contracted by One Call Members only mark the main line for the utility company they are contracted to. This means any private lines running from the main line may NOT be marked. To locate and mark these lines you will have to hire a Private Locating Company. Also, in some areas, One Call locators will only mark lines leading to the private property and will not mark lines on the private property that were installed by the original builder. The utilities are typically marked by paint using Industry Standard Colors.

5. Is Global GPR Services a One Call locator?

No. Global GPR Services is a Private Locator, which uses Ground Penetrating Radar to locate and map primary utilities and any other subsurface anomalies (such as secondary lines, private lines, buried tanks, septic systems, etc.) on private properties.

6. What services do Private Locators offer?

Private Locators are generally contracted to locate utilities buried on private property that have not been marked by a One Call Locator. Many Private Locators will only locate from the marked utilities located by the One Call service by placing a trace signal on those lines and identifying where the lines are buried using a Radio Detection or Electromagnetic (EM) device. Although this is an accurate method for locating those specific lines it is possible to miss utilities that are not identified by the One Call service. A more comprehensive under ground survey is typically conducted by Private Locators who use additional technologies such as Ground Penetrating Radar equipment.

7. What utility locating services does Global GPR Services offer?

As our company name indicates we specialize in subsurface locating and mapping using Ground Penetrating Radar. We are therefore able to locate primary and secondary utility lines and many other anomalies buried underground which may be costly to repair or even dangerous to the excavator. In addition to marking all the located utilities and anomalies located on site we have experienced GPR technicians who can analyze the data collected and create detailed mapped reports with interpreted locations and depths plotted to scale.

8. Why use a GPR Service if we have to use One Call locating anyway?

Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) is a complimentary technology to Radio Detection and Electromagnetic (EM) locating technology. The benefits that GPR provides are many. The lateral position and depth of buried utilities is more accurate with GPR. In congested utility locations GPR can detect the various utilities. GPR can locate buried utilities comprised of different materials. GPR can locate metallic and non-metallic utilities even those without a trace wire or element.

GPR surveyors often collect data for the survey area in a grid format. A GPR survey grid means that more area is covered and unknown objects can be discovered and ensure full coverage of the area. Traditional (EM) locate equipment requires the transmitting antenna be inline with the utility if you are using induction mode or they may be missed. GPR does not have this requirement so utilities running in an obscure direction can be identified.

Once the GPR data has been collected a 3D map of the ground and its infrastructure can be developed. This can be beneficial in congested areas for identifying utilities and also for pre-engineering purposes.

Although there is no technology that is 100% accurate, due to the varying ground science (i.e. soil type, soil mineralization, moisture content and conductivity) and the materials used for the utilities, combining traditional EM locating and GPR surveying is your safest bet.

For Information Regarding Private Utility Locates

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