Underground Utility Safety

The nine steps to achieve underground utility safety include:

1) Underground utility safety begins by marking the proposed excavation area with white paint, white stakes or white flags.

2) Upon marking the proposed excavation area the one call system is to be notified of the impending excavation.
   a) Dig Safely New York (1-800-962-7962)
   b) New York City Long Island One Call Center (1-800-272-4480).
   c) Utilities that do not belong to the one call system shall be contacted separately.

3) The one call system will notify applicable underground utility companies.

4) The utility companies will determine and mark all locations of underground utilities.
   a) The contractor should check to see that underground utility markings are connected to physical features.
      i) Underground gas markings are connected to gas valve boxes
      ii) Utility wires running down utility poles are connected to underground electrical and/or communication markings
      iii) Marked underground water mains connect to water valves and hydrants
      iv) Underground utility markings are connected/directed to manholes, valves, drainage structures etc.

5) Contractor must verify the location of conflicting underground facilities.
   a) Marked underground utilities that the contractor can not verify shall be immediately reported to the one call center and utility company.
      i) The utility company must locate the underground utility.

6) Power equipment may not be used within 100 mm (4 inches) of an underground utility facility.
   a) Only a hand shovel or vacuum excavation can be used within the 100 mm of the underground utility.
   b) Excavation is prohibited within the tolerance zone of a marked underground utility prior to verifying the precise location, size, depth, and direction of the marked the utility.
      i) The tolerance zone is the a distance of 0.6m (24 inches) on either side of the designated centerline, plus one-half of the utility diameter, if the utility diameter is known.
      ii) Upon verifying the precise location, size, depth, and direction of the marked the utility the contractor may begin excavating within 24 inches of the marked utility Excavation near a marked underground utility should begin outside and adjacent to the 0.6 m (24") underground utility tolerance zone until the underground utility is located.
   c) Power equipment may be used to remove pavement prior to verifying the location of the underground utility.
      i) Our spec permits only the removal of the pavement.
      ii) The utility location must be verified before any excavation with power equipment below the pavement.
Tailgate Safety Talks

(1) Removing pavement over marked underground utilities should be begin by breaking, scooping and moving pavement outside and adjacent to the 0.6 m (24") underground utility tolerance zone.

7) The contractor shall support and protect from damage all exposed underground facilities.

8) The Contractor shall protect and preserve underground utility markings until no longer required for safe work near the underground facility.

9) The Contractor shall provide to the Engineer, in writing, the information provided to the one-call notification system, or the Utility if it is not a One-Call notification system member, and the control number issued for each call placed to request designation of underground facilities.

Contact or Damage of an Underground Utility

1) In the case of natural gas and/or electric facility contacts, the contractor is to stop work, evacuate the site, contact 911 (notifying the police and fire departments), notify the utility company and notify the engineer-in-charge.

2) In the event that an underground facility (other than natural gas facility) is contacted or damaged, the contractor shall immediately notify the utility and engineer-in-charge, suspend excavation or demolition in the immediate vicinity of the contacted or damaged facility and take emergency actions as are warranted to protect all endangered persons.