



# Safe Excavation & Safety Watch Guidelines



For your **SAFETY**

**ClickBefore**  
 **YouDigMB.com**

 **Manitoba  
Hydro**

Or call 1-800-940-3447

# RELEASE OF NATURAL GAS

In the event of any damage to a natural gas pipeline (regardless of whether it is steel, plastic or aluminum) or to its protective pipe coating or tracer wire, however minor, call Manitoba Hydro immediately 204-480-5900 or 1-888-624-9376. In most cases there is no charge for minor repairs.

In case of damage causing a release of natural gas:

- Call 911 and Manitoba Hydro immediately.
- Clear people from the vicinity and prevent people from approaching the area of the leak.
- Shut off all vehicles and equipment. Remove or extinguish all sources of ignition. **DO NOT** smoke or allow open flame in the presence of natural gas.
- If a gas line has been punctured, do not remove the tool or equipment that punctured the line. This could result in a larger gas leak and pose a greater hazard.
- **DO NOT** attempt to backfill over a leaking natural gas line or attempt to stop the leak; it is safest to allow the gas to vent into the atmosphere.

Before you start to dig, contact [ClickBeforeYouDigMB.com](http://ClickBeforeYouDigMB.com) to request to have underground lines located. Manitoba Hydro will be notified and will contact you within three business days to advise of the date we will locate our electric and natural gas lines.

- Once the lines are marked we will provide you with a Facilities Locate form with specific instructions. You must obtain this form prior to excavation.
- If work has not started within 14 calendar days after the locate was provided by Manitoba Hydro, you must contact us to have the lines re-marked and receive an updated Facilities Locate form.
- Contractors must ensure that everyone on the worksite is aware of the presence of all gas and electric facilities and ensure that the Facilities Locate form is kept at the excavation site until the excavation and backfill are complete.
- The location markings must be maintained and kept visible by the person or contractor doing the excavation. Be careful that site operators do not remove the line location markings.

**In addition to contacting [ClickBeforeYouDigMB.com](http://ClickBeforeYouDigMB.com) be sure to contact any other underground services that may be in the area.**

This guideline applies to the crossing of Manitoba Hydro electrical conductors and natural gas pipelines only. When Manitoba Hydro fibre optic cables are present contractors will be referred by the Manitoba Hydro Facilities Locator to the Manitoba Hydro communications department for more information.

*Manitoba Hydro only locates facilities that it owns and has no knowledge of or responsibility for privately owned facilities. Electric conductors or gas pipes installed past the meter are owned privately by the property owner, and at times are installed below ground before entering the building. Outbuildings that are heated or have electric power, wells, septic systems, pumps, pools and hot tubs are examples where privately owned buried facilities may exist.*

*This booklet has been prepared by Manitoba Hydro for Manitoba Hydro staff, contractors and homeowners involved with excavation and is available at [hydro.mb.ca](http://hydro.mb.ca). Information on excavation and safety watch is included to inform excavators about basic requirements for excavation in the vicinity of buried electric power lines and gas pipelines. Unless otherwise indicated, gas pipelines and underground power cables will be called “lines”.*

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# WHY YOU SHOULD PLAN AHEAD

When you contact ClickBeforeYouDigMB.com before you dig, we can identify buried lines so you can dig safely. This prevents injury or death, costly repairs, equipment damage, service outages, and environmental pollution.

**It is YOUR responsibility to contact all owners of buried underground services.**

## PLANNING LARGE PROJECTS

Determining the location of existing Manitoba Hydro Underground Structures within the work area should be one of the first priorities of any work. Knowing the location of all utilities infrastructure allows the third party to plan work proactively, mitigating the need for costly design changes or delays during construction.

### **Gas**

Manitoba Hydro requests that drawings be submitted for review for all projects involving ground disturbance. Drawings shall be submitted to: [gasdesign@hydro.mb.ca](mailto:gasdesign@hydro.mb.ca).

Drawings will be reviewed by Manitoba Hydro at no cost and a letter providing details of any work restrictions, specific requirements or costs will be provided to the contractor.

Drawings should be submitted a minimum of 4 weeks before the start of any excavation work. Drawings shall include the details of the proposed work and include any gas or electrical line in the work area.

### **Electric**

Contact Manitoba Hydro in Winnipeg at 204-480-5900 or outside Winnipeg at 1-888-MBHYDRO (1-888-624-9376)

You will be referred to the local district office for further instruction.

# REGULATIONS

There are several federal and provincial agencies overseeing the operation of and around natural gas pipelines and electric cables. The following regulations and safe practice guides specify requirements for both the contractor and the utility:

- Manitoba Gas Pipeline Act, Regulation 140/92 – Provides the legal definition of an excavation and outlines Excavator and Utility responsibilities.
- National Energy Board Pipeline Damage Prevention Regulations: Authorizations, SOR/2016-124; Obligations of pipeline companies, SOR/2016-133
- Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulation M.R. 217/2006 including Part 26, Excavations and Tunnels - Describes legal responsibilities in regards to excavating safely.
- Guideline for Excavation Work, Manitoba Workplace Safety & Health Division.
- CSA Z247 Damage Prevention Standard.

# DEFINITIONS

**Daylighting** – A term used to describe the uncovering and exposing of underground utilities to daylight without the use of mechanical excavation.

**Excavation** – includes digging, boring, pushing, ploughing, trenching, grading, post installation and breaking and displacement of soil or other material below the existing level of the ground that will disturb more than the top 150 mm (6 inches) of the ground.

**High Pressure gas line** – A natural gas line that operates in excess of 700 KPa (100psi).

**Hydrovac** – A truck or trailer that injects pressurized water from an onboard reservoir tank into the ground through a handheld wand. As the soil cover is liquefied, the resulting slurry is simultaneously extracted by a powerful vacuum and stored in an onboard debris tank for later disposal.

**Large diameter pipeline** – A natural gas pipeline that is 168.3 mm (6 inches) in diameter or larger, regardless of operating pressure.

**Safety Watcher** – A person designated by Manitoba Hydro to ensure that workers are not put at risk as a result of special hazards on the work site.

**Sonde** - A transmitter behind the bore head which registers angle, rotation, direction and temperature data.

**Tolerance Zone** – The space in which a line or facility is located, and in which special care is to be taken.

**White lining** – Designating the route and/or work area of the excavation using white paint, stakes and/or flags to outline the work area prior to the locator arriving on the site.



# EXCAVATOR PRE-MARKING

Pre-marking your proposed work site allows excavators to accurately communicate to Manitoba Hydro's facility locators where the excavation is to occur. This may be accomplished either electronically or by white lining.

For excavator pre-marking, contact [ClickBeforeYouDigMB.com](http://ClickBeforeYouDigMB.com) or call 1-800-940-3447 to communicate where the excavation is to occur and:

- Attach a sketch or map that clearly identifies the excavation area via email or
- Pre-mark the excavation area by white lining

In either scenario you will be issued a reference number and notified of the day the locator will be on site.

*When a project is too large for or not conducive to pre-marking, face-to-face meetings between Manitoba Hydro's facility locator and the excavators will be arranged at the proposed work site.*

## **White Line**

The excavator designates the route and/or area of the excavation using white paint, stakes and/or flags to outline the work area prior to the locator arriving on the site.

White paint, white stakes or white flags with the excavator's company identifier on them are permissible methods of marking.

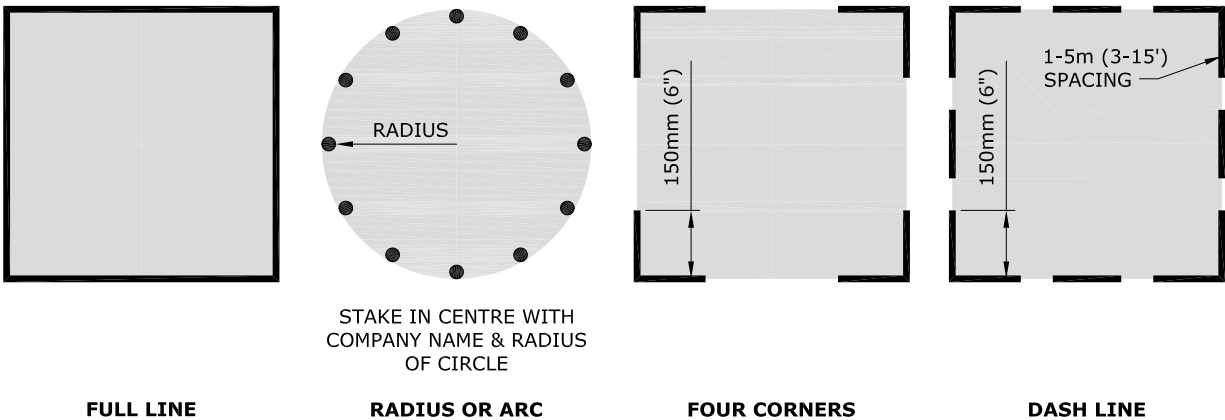
When using stakes or flags to mark the excavation work area, do not drive them into the ground deeper than 150 mm (6 inches). Any activity which disturbs more than 150 mm (6 inches) must have the facilities located.

# Guidelines for excavation marking

The following marking illustrations are examples of how excavators may choose to mark their area of proposed excavation. The use of white marking products (e.g. paint, flags, stakes, or a combination of these) may be used to identify the excavation site.

Mark in white paint the proposed area of excavation through the use of a continuous line, dots marking the radius or arcs, dashes marking the four corners of the project, or dashes outlining the excavation project. The recommended size of each dash is approximately 150 – 300 mm (6-12 inches) in length and 20 mm (3/4 inch) in width with interval spacing approximately 1 – 5 metres (3-16 feet) apart. The maximum separation of excavation marks is to be reduced to a length that can be reasonably seen by the operator's locators when the terrain or excavation site conditions warrant it. Dots of approximately 20 mm (3/4 inch) diameter are typically used to define arcs or radii and may be placed at closer intervals in lieu of dashes.

### SINGLE POINT EXCAVATION MARKINGS



If an excavation is contained within a 5 metre (16 feet) maximum radius then it can be marked with a single white stake at the centre of the excavation. The stake must clearly state the company identifier and the radius of the excavation in black lettering. This information must be conveyed to Manitoba Hydro.

## **After the area is Pre-Marked**

On the appointed date, the locator will identify the Manitoba Hydro facilities that are located in the designated work area. They will document it using a sketch or map attached to the Electric and/or Natural Gas Facilities Locate Form.









When the locator has completed locating the facilities, they will advise the excavator and indicate whether there is a conflict. The Facilities Locate form will be available and must be on site prior to excavating.

The Manitoba Gas Pipeline Act, Regulation 140/92 and the Workplace Safety and Health Act, regulations M.R.217/2006, part 26.6 require that a valid Facilities Locate form be on the work site at all times until the project is complete.

If an excavation takes place without a current locate form on site, the locate is not valid. The excavator could face consequences which may include fines and/or sanctions by Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health and Manitoba Hydro.

# APWA UNIFORM COLOUR CODE

## Underground utility marking

	<b>WHITE</b> – Proposed Excavation
	<b>PINK</b> – Temporary Survey Markings
	<b>RED</b> – Electric Power Lines, Cables, Conduit and Lighting Cables
	<b>YELLOW</b> – Gas, Oil, Petroleum, or Gaseous Materials
	<b>ORANGE</b> – Communication, Alarm or Signal Lines, Cables or Conduit
	<b>BLUE</b> – Potable Water
	<b>PURPLE</b> – Reclaimed Water, Irrigation and Slurry Lines
	<b>GREEN</b> – Sewer and Drain Lines

## GUIDELINES FOR EXCAVATION NEAR ELECTRICAL AND NATURAL GAS LINES

### Hand Digging to Expose Lines

Mechanical excavation cannot be used within 1 metre (39 inches) of an electrical or gas line until the line is physically exposed by hand. Hand exposing means exposing a buried facility, whose location has been marked by Manitoba Hydro, using non-powered tools such as a Spade or shovel (hand augers are not acceptable). A water pressure/vacuum system (hydrovac) is an acceptable alternative.

There are several things to remember when hand exposing:

- No one should ever jump on or use their entire body weight on a shovel when digging.
- Use a prying (rather than striking) motion to loosen hard dirt.
- Never probe for the facility using a sharp pointed tool such as a pick axe or pointed bar.
- Dig on an angle if possible, such that any contact with the facility is a glancing blow rather than a direct hit.

Once the line is visible, mechanical excavation equipment can be used in accordance with the guidelines for mechanical excavation.

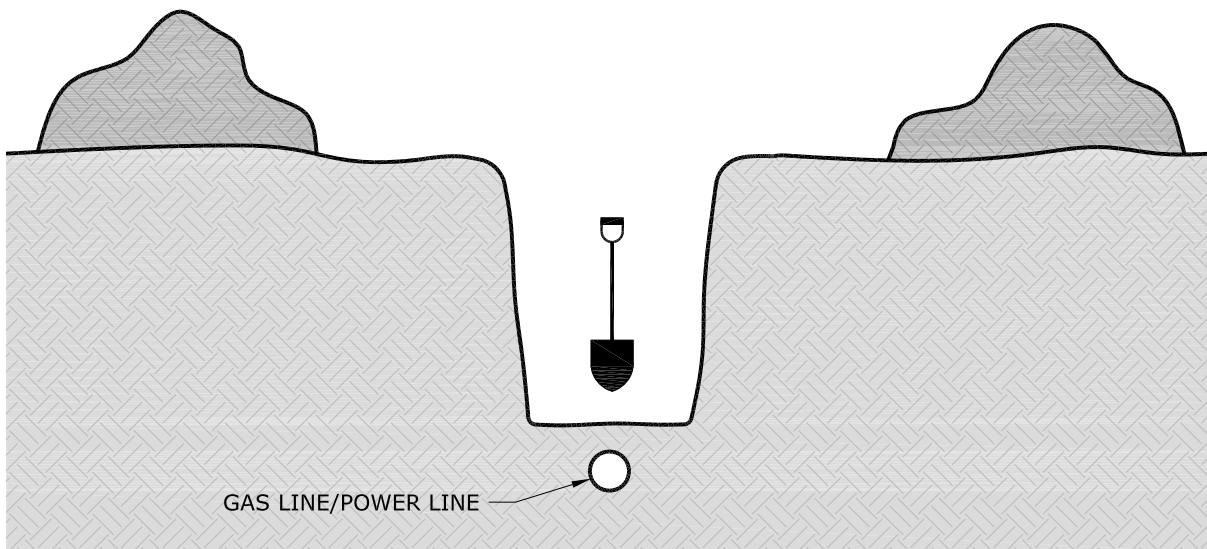
## **Water Pressure/Vacuum System (Hydrovac)**

An alternative to exposing cables by hand digging is to use a water pressure/vacuum system capable of exposing Manitoba Hydro facilities without damage.

Only oscillating head type nozzles are to be used for the water wand. When excavating within 1 metre of a marked line the maximum setting of 38°C (100°F) water temperature and 10,342 Kpa (1,500 psi) must not be exceeded. The end of the vacuum tube shall be neoprene or equivalent. Expose the buried line by using a sweeping motion only, perpendicular to the locate markings, until the line is sighted. *IMPORTANT: After sighting, the line shall not be contacted by spray or vacuum to avoid damage to wraps and coatings.*

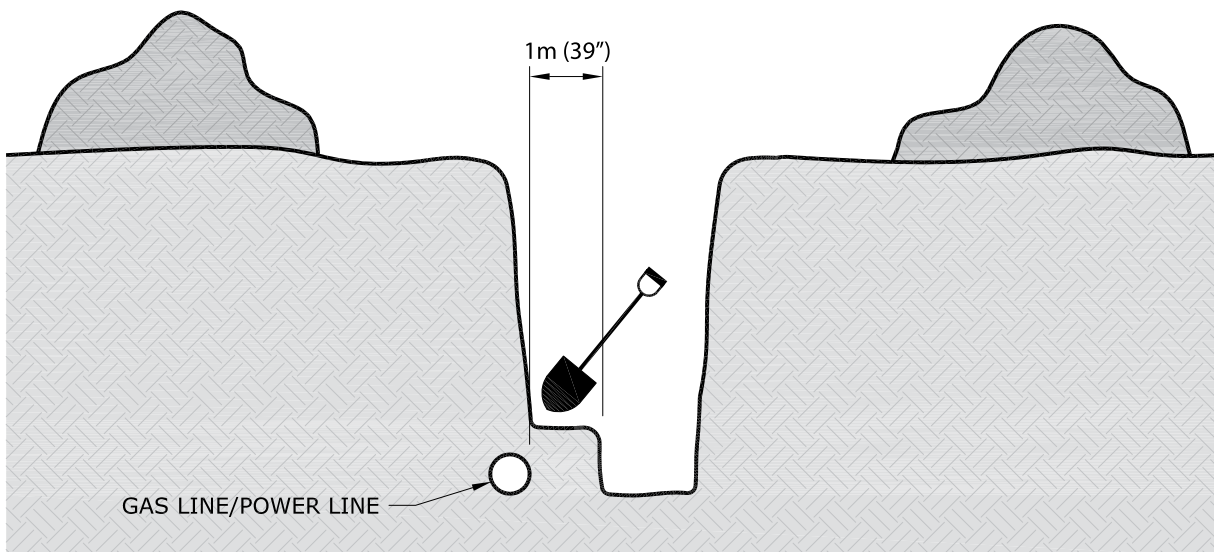
Some acceptable excavation methods:

### **a) Dig Vertically**



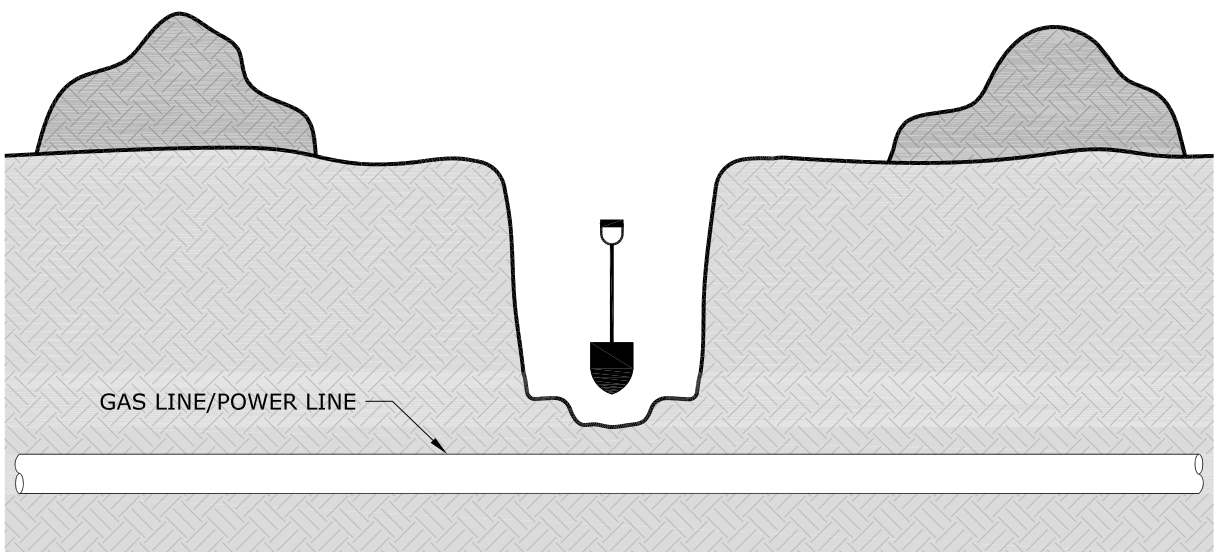
Dig a hole with a shovel directly above the line location until the line is exposed. Take care not to damage the line or coating. Mechanical excavation equipment **MUST NOT** be used to widen or deepen the hole before exposing the line.

## b) Dig Laterally



Dig a trench or bell hole 1 metre (39 inches) from the line location, parallel to the line, then hand dig laterally to expose the line.

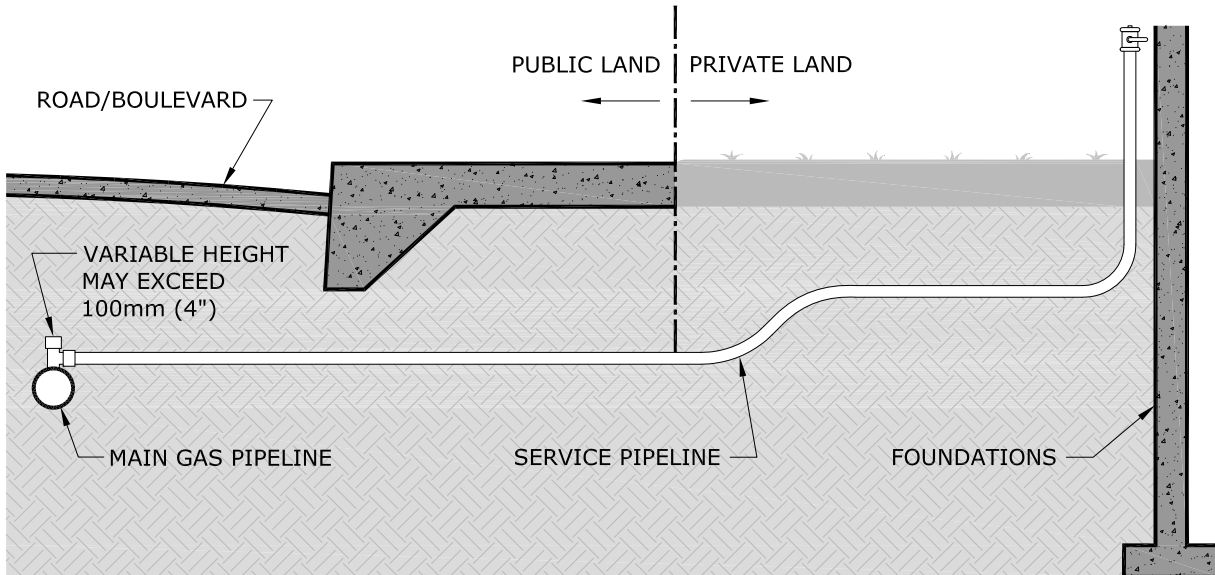
## c) Dig Trench and excavate



Dig a trench by hand across the full width of the excavation (perpendicular to or “across from” the line). If the line is not uncovered, mechanically excavate to one half the depth of the trench. Repeat this process until the line is exposed.

# Typical Gas Service Installation

(example only does not represent all installations)

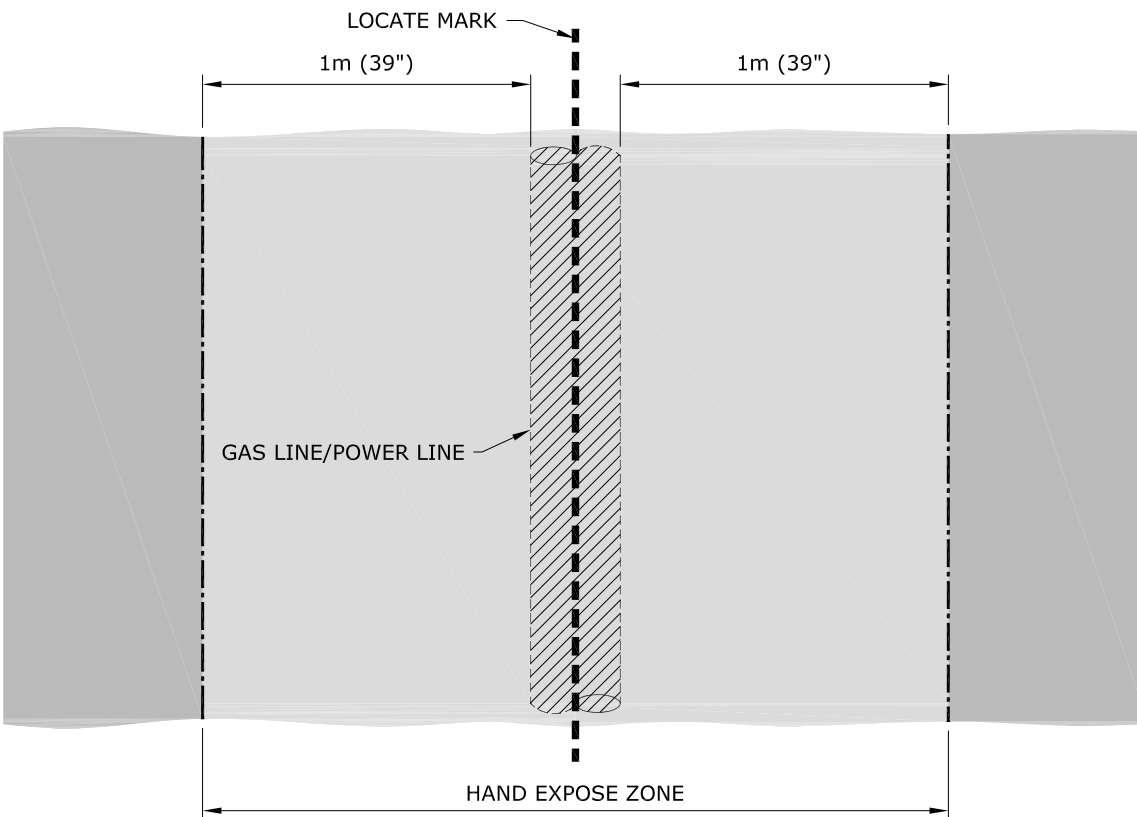


Fittings such as active or abandoned service tees may be present on gas pipelines, exercise care when excavating.

## General Approach

- When the line is not visible, mechanical excavation shall not be used within 1 metre (39 inches) of an electrical or gas line.
- When the line is visible, mechanical excavation can be used no closer than 450 mm (18 inches) to natural gas lines and 600 mm (24 inches) to electrical lines.
- When soil conditions permit, a smooth edge bucket is preferred when excavating near gas and electrical lines.
- An observer (excavator staff) located near the line must maintain communication and control of the operator at all times by the use of hand signals and verbal communication. The observer is responsible for maintaining the minimum distance from the pipe. If at any point the observer or operator is unclear of the location or orientation of the line, no digging shall occur until this is confirmed and agreed upon by all on the worksite.

## Before line is exposed



## Crossing Lines

- When crossing a line, the line is to be exposed for the width of the excavation.
- After the line is daylighted, and provided there is space for excavator access, it is recommended that excavation near the line be performed parallel to the line.

## Working Parallel to Lines

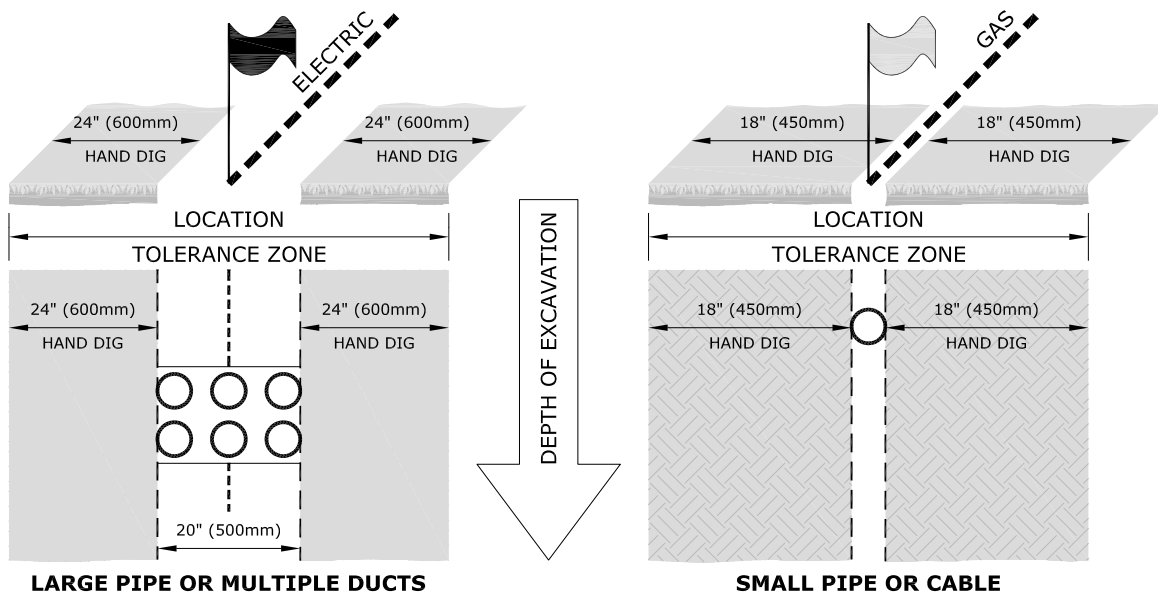
- When working parallel to a line it is not necessary to expose the full length of the line to reduce the acceptable mechanical excavation separation. A series of daylight holes along the line is acceptable. The distance between daylight holes will be a maximum of 10 metres (33 feet) or as required to define the location of the line. Daylight holes must be large enough to expose the full width of the line or lines.
- After daylighting and previewing of the line, marks shall be placed a minimum of 450 mm (18 inches) from the outside of the line at each daylight hole for gas and 600 mm (24 inches)



for electrical lines. This tolerance zone should be marked along the entire length of the work area to ensure that the operator maintains proper alignment with the line. With the line daylighted and the tolerance zone marked, it is acceptable to use mechanical excavation on the outside of the marked line of the tolerance zone.

- If at any point the line becomes obscured, it shall be remarked immediately. The observer is responsible for maintaining the minimum distance from the pipe by confirming the machine's distance and alignment with the line. The operator will orient his machine parallel to the line so their bucket remains more than 450 mm (18 inches) away for gas and 600 mm (24 inches) away for electric lines. They must preview the work prior to entering their machine and prior to any trenching.

### Once line is exposed



### Hard Surface Removal

- Mechanical equipment can be used to remove the asphalt or concrete road/sidewalk surface and should only be used to the depth of that surface.
- Avoid starting the pavement break directly over the marked facility.
- Start a few feet away from the marks and attempt to "peel off" the pavement or break it into small chunks for removal.

## **Line Exposed**

When a length of line is exposed consult the utility for proper handling procedures. The line may need to be supported to prevent settling or sagging.

## **No Relocation**

The line shall not be moved or relocated. No operation or work shall be done that would put stress on the line.

## **Inspect for Damage**

Electric Power Lines – If you suspect a power cable has been damaged, contact Manitoba Hydro to inspect the cable. Do not contact the cable as it may be energized.

Gas Pipelines – Thoroughly clean (with water only) and inspect the exposed gas line for damage to the pipe, yellow plastic pipe covering or tracer wire (used on plastic pipe). If damage is found, notify Manitoba Hydro. They will repair minor damage to the pipe coating or tracer wire at no charge.

Report Contact or Damage – Any contact with or damage to any line or underground cable must be reported immediately to Manitoba Hydro.

## **Backfilling**

To prevent settling or stress, the contractor is required to place clean fill under the power or gas line and compact the fill. The backfill material must be free of rocks, sharp objects or other material that could damage the line.

If the backfill material is frozen, it should be free of large frozen lumps of soil. The backfill material must be gradually placed, not dumped, on the line. Alternatively, the line may be hand padded with 300 mm (12 inches) of screened sand or soft fill before backfilling.

If mechanical protection is required, or if the backfill contains rocks, the cable or pipeline must be enclosed in a 150 mm (6 inches) envelope of screened sand.

## **Access**

Manitoba Hydro utility personnel shall have access to the excavation to inspect the underground line at any time during construction.

## **Project Closeout**

When the excavation project has been completed all flags and stakes used to mark gas and electric lines shall be removed from the site.

# **SAFETY WATCH**

Safety Watch is a program where an employee qualified by Manitoba Hydro observes the excavation work in progress and determines actions to be taken by the contractor to prevent injury, property damage or damage to Manitoba Hydro facilities.

Safety Watch personnel work with the excavator to check that:

- the excavation is done safely;
- rules and procedures related to the excavation are followed;
- the plant is located accurately;
- all documentation is accurate and complete;
- Hydrovac guidelines are followed.

**Safety Watch personnel shall be recognized as an authority on site with the ability to shut the job down.**

## **When is a Safety Watch required?**

Any excavation within 3 metres (10 feet) of a cable or pipeline may require a Safety Watch. The need for a safety watch will be assessed and identified on the Facilities Locate form. The decision to provide a Safety Watch will be based on the excavation proposed, the type of cable or pipeline, and the proximity of the excavation to the cable or pipeline.

## **Why is a Safety Watch done?**

Safety Watch service is provided to ensure the safety of customers and their contractors when working in close proximity to either energized electrical or pressurized gas lines. In addition, this protects the integrity of the utility lines minimizing the chance of an outage.

*NOTE: Typically, Safety Watch personnel are not provided for low voltage conductors (under 750 volts) or distribution pressure gas mains and services under 168.3 mm (6 inches) diameter. However, Manitoba Hydro staff may assess the situation and choose to provide Safety Watch personnel where conditions warrant.*

## **Who pays for a Safety Watch?**

Generally, Safety Watch service is provided at no cost to the homeowner for minor projects. For larger projects, the contractor may be charged at a cost shared rate. Contact the local district office for further information.

## **How to arrange for a Safety Watch.**

When an underground line is located in response to a Click Before You Dig request, the Manitoba Hydro employee will indicate whether a Safety Watch is required. Call Manitoba Hydro to arrange for a Safety Watch appointment a minimum of three business days before any excavation is to occur.

# DIRECTIONAL BORING – CONTRACTOR GUIDELINES

As with all ground disturbance activity, the excavator must first obtain a facilities locate from Manitoba Hydro.

The distance measured to Manitoba Hydro electrical conductor or gas pipeline must always be measured from the **outside** diameter or wall of the Manitoba Hydro facility to the outside diameter of the back reamer. The same measuring methodology must be used when paralleling Manitoba Hydro facilities.

When boring within the tolerance zone of a high pressure or large diameter gas pipeline or any critical distribution gas pipeline or electrical conductor, as identified by Manitoba Hydro's Facilities Locate personnel, qualified natural gas or electric Safety Watch personnel are required.

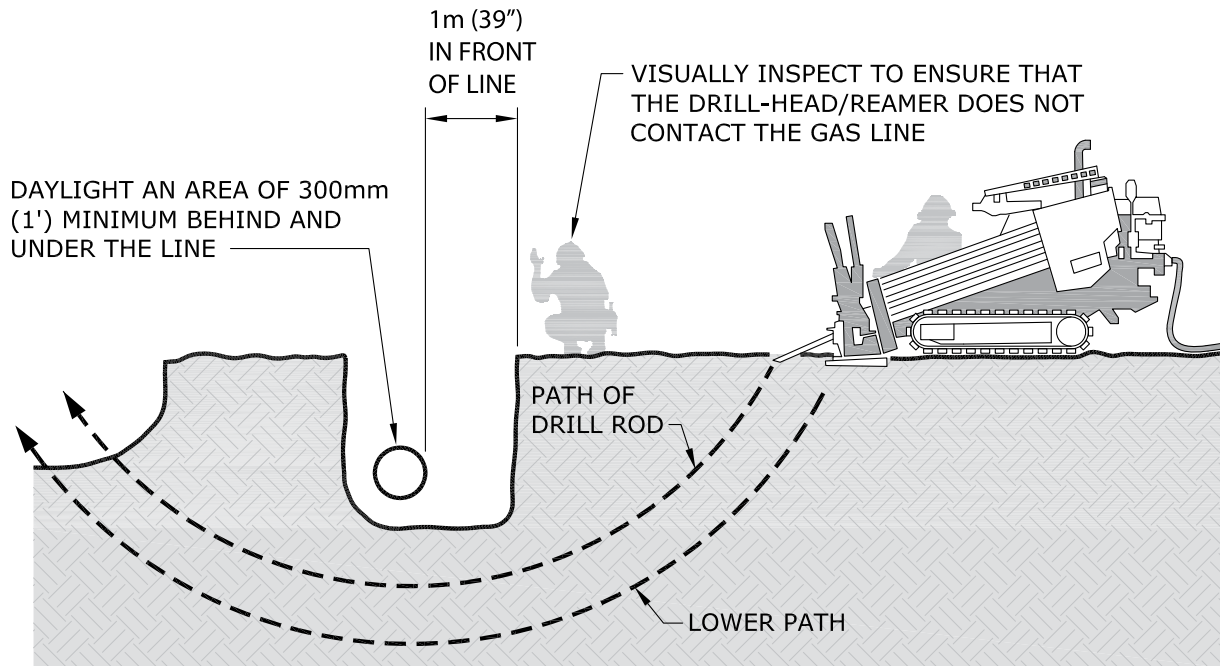
## Electrical Conductors and Gas Pipelines

Prior to directional boring across Manitoba Hydro gas and electrical lines, the buried depth must be confirmed. Acceptable practice to verify line depth is to:

- Expose the line by hand digging, or
- Expose the line by water pressure/vacuum excavation; or
- Locate on the side wall of a trench that has been excavated 1 metre (39 inches) on either side of the surface locates; or
- Use reference measurements that are known to be accurate, for example: electrical duct lines.

The drill head and/or back reamer should at all times maintain a minimum of 1 metre (39 inches) clearance from all Manitoba Hydro lines.

Where underground facility congestion does not effectively allow a 1 metre (39 inches) clearance/separation from Manitoba Hydro lines, the contractor may consult with Manitoba Hydro Engineering for site specific direction. Any deviations in clearances/separations must be provided in writing and must be present on-site when the work is being performed.



## Observation Hole Required When Crossing Any Manitoba Hydro Facility

The accuracy of the drill head location and depth must be visually verified 1 metre (39 inches) prior to crossing Manitoba Hydro facilities. An observation or discovery hole is required.

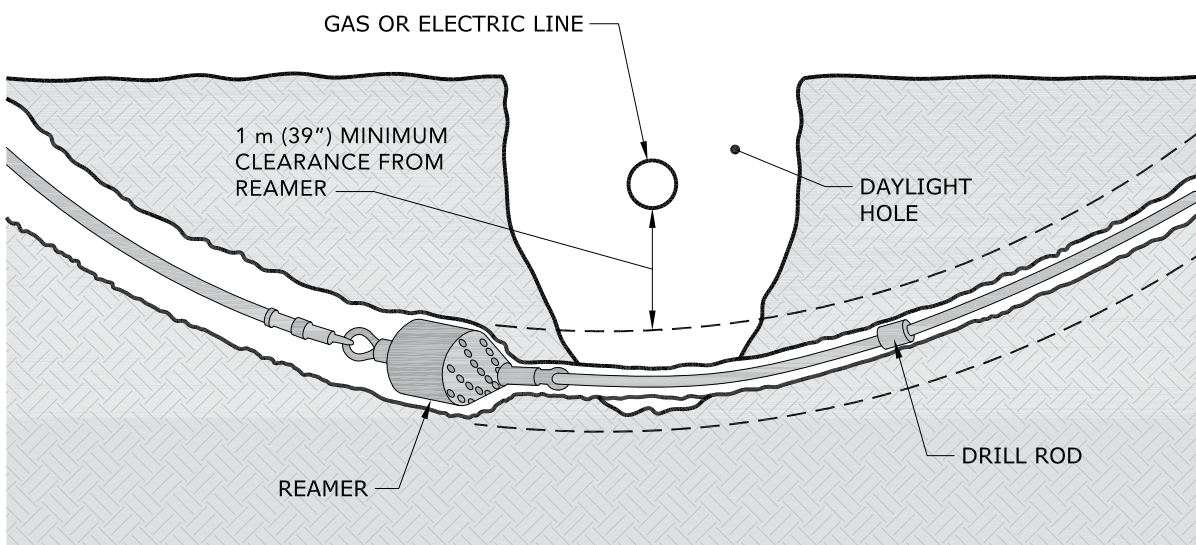
Acceptable practice for opening up the observation hole is using water pressure/vacuum or hand digging.

When boring head and/or back reamers path is crossing above a natural gas pipeline or electrical conductor the boring head and/or back reamer must be visually observed crossing the facility.

When the boring head and/or backreamer's path is crossing below a gas pipeline or electrical conductor an observer must verify that the bore head and/or reamer does not enter the observation hole within 1 metre of the line.

The minimum dimensions of the observation/discovery hole MUST BE:

- 1 metre (39 inches) in front of the gas pipeline or electrical conductor on the near side of the bore path;
- 300 mm (12 inches) on the far side of the bore path;
- 300 mm (12 inches) on each side of the bore path;
- 300 mm (12 inches) below natural gas pipeline or electrical conductor.



## Drilling Parallel to Manitoba Hydro Facilities

### Paralleling Electrical Conductors & Natural Gas Pipelines

There must be 1 metre (39 inches) of separation between the outside diameter of the back reamer assembly and the outside diameter of any Manitoba Hydro electrical conductors or natural gas pipelines.

*NOTE: When drilling within 1 metre (39 inches) horizontally, the drill must be kept at a depth either deeper or shallower than the existing electrical conductor or natural gas pipeline to maintain 1 metre (39 inches) separation when measured diagonally.*

If 1 metre (39 inches) horizontal separation cannot be maintained, the electrical conductor or natural gas pipeline adjacent to the bore path must be exposed. When it is not possible to de-energize electrical conductors, a Safety Hold-Off must be in place and qualified Safety Watch personnel must be on site.

When suspected of drilling within 1 metre (39 inches) of any gas or electrical lines determined by the boring head (sonde) position readings and the proximity to the locate marks, the location of the conductor or pipeline shall be verified; the electrical conductor or natural gas pipeline adjacent to the bore path must be hand exposed or exposed by water pressure/vacuum excavation as determined by Manitoba Hydro. The frequency of exposures depends on the consistency of the alignment of the existing facility.

Manitoba Hydro facilities must be exposed a minimum of once every 10 metres (33 feet), to confirm alignment. Where there is an alignment change indicated by the locator marks, the Manitoba Hydro facility shall be visually confirmed at each alignment deviation.

## **UNPLANNED CONTACT WITH ELECTRIC OR NATURAL GAS LINES**

This guideline applies to people who come in contact with or simply expose a buried utility line while excavating.

Anyone who comes in contact with buried utility lines should contact the utility owner immediately. Although there may be no apparent external damage, the impact of striking a line can cause internal structural damage that can only be determined and repaired by qualified utility personnel. Generally, we do not charge for this inspection and coating repair.

### **Abrasions**

Even if contact does not cause the utility line to stop working, a nick or cut to the outer, protective sheath of the utility line can allow ground water, laden with salts and other caustic substances, to corrode the line. Abrasions may compromise the sidewall strength of a plastic, steel or aluminum gas line.



## **Aerial**

Cables suspended along utility poles can easily be damaged if struck by a vehicle or a mechanical implement like a hydraulic lift. Cable clamps and other attachments can be pulled apart and component housings may hide damage to the electronic equipment inside.

## **Stop Work**

If any equipment is snared in the utility lines, it should be left in place. Trying to extract, flex or manipulate the line can compound the damage. Operations at the site shall stop immediately. Operators should stay in the equipment unless it is not safe (as in the case of a fire) and all others should be kept clear of the equipment as it may have become energized. If you must leave the equipment, jump clear with both feet together so you are not in contact with the equipment and the ground at the same time. Continue to hop or shuffle with your feet close together until you are a safe distance away.

## **Call It In**

The person involved in the incident should call Manitoba Hydro immediately and report the location of the hit. (In Winnipeg at 204-480-5900 or outside of Winnipeg at 1-888-624-9376.) The exact address, or street intersection, along with what type of contact occurred, will help the utility respond in an appropriate manner.





**Click**  **Before**  
**YouDigMB.com**<sup>®</sup>

**Or call 1-800-940-3447**

In addition to contacting  
[ClickBeforeYouDigMB.com](http://ClickBeforeYouDigMB.com)  
be sure to contact other  
underground services in the area.

For more information visit  
[hydro.mb.ca](http://hydro.mb.ca)