



South **811** Carolina

EXCAVATOR MANUAL



Preface

This publication has been prepared for excavators in South Carolina. It is intended to be a reference tool for interacting with Palmetto Utility Protection Service, Inc., which does business as South Carolina 811, “SC811”.

We ask that you provide this manual to anyone in the state who is regularly involved in excavation activities. Familiarity with the contents of this manual is essential to successful communication between excavators, member operators, and SC811. We suggest that you keep this manual on hand for future reference when questions or problems arise.

We do not have a copyright on the material in this manual. We encourage you to copy as needed. For questions, or to request additional copies of the manual, please contact SC811.

This guide should not be used as a legal reference document. Persons seeking interpretations of the law should contact their attorney. While this guide is a useful tool for all excavators and Utility Members, their responsibilities are provided by the law.

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How to Contact SC811

Office	803-939-1117
Help Desk Line	800-290-2783 Option 1

Utility Location (Toll Free)

Within SC	811
Anywhere	888-721-7877
Website	www.sc811.com
Address	South Carolina 811 810 Dutch Square Blvd Suite 320 Columbia, SC 29210

Hours of Operation

Normal Locates: Mon-Fri, 7:30 am - 5:30 pm
Emergency Locates: 24/7

About South Carolina 811

SC811 is the notification center that receives information about planned excavation projects and notifies member facility operators who may have underground infrastructure in the area of excavation. Those facility operators are responsible for marking their underground lines. State law requires submitting a locate request to SC811 before any excavation begins. This is a free service and helps prevent utility damages that can lead to injuries, fines, and utility service interruptions.

Formed by member facility operators in 1978, Palmetto Utility Protection (d.b.a South Carolina 811) operates under the Underground Facility Damage Prevention Act to protect buried facilities and keep excavators and the general public safe.

Purpose: Safeguarding South Carolina's Tomorrow, One Dig at a Time

SC811 does NOT:

- Physically mark any underground facilities
- Resolve disputes between excavators and members
- Maintain a database of the exact location of underground facilities

All private facilities not owned by a facility operator will be the responsibility of the excavator/owner to have marked at their expense. Visit sc811.com/private-locators for a list of companies that locate private facilities.

Holidays

Notice days are determined by holidays, as defined by §53-5-10 SC Code of Laws. In addition, SC811 will be closed for the processing of normal locate notices during observed, legal holidays. Please note that these holidays are subject to change.

New Year's Day	MLK, Jr. Day
Memorial Day	Independence Day
Labor Day	Veterans Day
Thanksgiving Day	Day after Thanksgiving
Christmas Eve	Christmas Day

The holidays listed below are recognized by §53-5-10 SC Code of Laws. SC811 will be open, but the 3 full working day notice will be calculated from the next business day.

Presidents Day	Confederate Memorial Day
Day after Christmas	

How to Request a Locate Notice

Phone: Call 811 within the state of South Carolina or 888-721-7877 toll free outside of South Carolina to speak with a Customer Service Representative.

Online: Use Exactix to submit a locate request. Visit www.sc811.com on your computer or mobile device and click the button, “Request a Locate”. Locate requests will be processed according to the user’s level.

Excavator Web Tickets Plus: Processed same day
Entry Level Web User: Processed the next business day if submitted after 3:00 pm.

Online Ticket Entry System: Exactix

SC811 provides an online ticket entry and management system Exactix, designed to help users submit and manage locate requests efficiently. Through Exactix users can submit locate requests, link accounts with others within their organization, and view and respond to Positive Response information.

Exactix also includes additional tools such as damage reporting, large project entry, and access to reports on Positive Response activity, pending notices, and performance report cards.

Exactix continues to evolve, with new features and enhancements added regularly. For the most up-to-date information visit www.sc811.com.

Required Information on a Locate Request

- 1. Contact information for the person making the request-** includes name, address, phone number, and email address
- 2. Job site or field contact information-** includes the name and phone number of the on-site contact person
- 3. Information about the work being performed-** including who is performing the work and who the work is being done for
- 4. Type of equipment-** all equipment that may be used during the excavation
- 5. Description of the work-** the type(s) of work being performed
- 6. Estimated duration of the work-** how long is the excavation expected to take
- 7. Excavation location details-** including county, city, physical address, and a nearby intersecting or reference road

Locate Request Timeline (Normal Notices Only)

After a normal locate request is submitted, Locators have three full working days to mark their underground facilities. This timeframe does **not** include the day the request is submitted, weekends, or holidays. Excavation may begin the next working day, provided the Excavator has:

- Checked Positive Response
- Confirmed all locates have been completed
- Verified there are no visible signs of unmarked facilities

A Normal locate request is valid for 15 working days from its start time. Once the request expires, a new locate request must be submitted before work can continue.

Design Request

A Design request is a non-excavation notice and does not authorize any excavation activity. Once a Design request is submitted, member operators have 15 full working days to respond. This timeframe does not include the day the request is submitted, weekends, or holidays.

An operator's response may include locating the lines with paint or flags, providing the best available description of the facilities, or allowing the person to inspect drawings/records of the facilities in the area at an acceptable location.

An operator may reject a Design request based on homeland security, pending additional information that confirms the legitimacy of the request. Before any excavation can take place, a normal locate request must be submitted.

Emergency Excavation

Definition of an Emergency

An emergency is any sudden or unforeseen event that requires immediate action due to one or more of the following:

- **Threats to life, health, or property**- situations that pose a clear and imminent danger.
- **Disruption of essential existing utility services**-interruptions to critical services such as electricity, gas, water, or communications.
- **Blockage of transportation facilities**-obstructions affecting highways, railways, waterways, or air transport that impede normal operations.

Notice Requirements

An excavator performing an emergency excavation or demolition is exempt from the standard notice requirements in Section 58-36-60. However, the following steps must be taken as soon as practicable:

1. Notify the notification center of the emergency by phone or online at www.sc811.com.
2. Provide oral notice to any affected facility operators.
3. Describe the circumstances of the emergency to the notification center.
4. Request emergency assistance from each affected operator to locate and provide immediate protection for their facilities.

Communication Requirements

The person responsible for the emergency excavation or demolition must either be on-site or maintain direct communication with the operator, their contract locator, or their representative through the notification center's positive response system. This communication must occur within three hours of the notification center transmitting notice of the emergency excavation or demolition.

Liability and Compliance

- Declaring an emergency excavation or demolition **does not relieve any party of liability** for damage to an operator's facilities, even if those facilities are unmarked.
- **Falsely claiming** that an emergency exists requiring excavation or demolition **violates the provisions of this chapter.**

Large Projects - Requirements and Procedures

Determine if the Project Qualifies

A project is considered large if it:

- Requires more work to locate underground facilities than standard Section 58-36-70 allows
- Is expected to take more than 90 days
- Is one of the following
 - Highway infrastructure > 1 mile or > 2 sq. miles in areas with underground facilities
 - Development project in areas with underground facilities
 - Utility infrastructure > 1 mile or > 2 sq. miles in areas with underground facilities

Provide Advanced Notice

- Notify the notification center at least 30 days before starting the project.

Schedule Planning Meeting

Within 15 days of notice, set a planning meeting with:

- All affected facility operators
- Locators
- Excavators involved in the project

Planning Meeting Agenda

Project initiator or designee provides:

- **Project overview**
- **Contact information** for initiator/designee (update all participants after initial meeting).
- **Project timelines** and phases
- **Proposed facility location agreement**, including:
 - Notice of excavation timelines
 - Facility marking schedules
 - Positive response requirements

All participants must negotiate in good faith to agree on notice and response procedures. The agreement must meet or exceed the standards of Sections 58-36-60 and 58-36-70.

Submit and Maintain Agreement

- Submit the **facility location agreement** to the notification center.
- The notification center keeps records and provides copies to any involved excavator, locator, or operator upon request.

Effect on Standard Requirements

- If unable to attend the planning meetings, participants **must still follow the agreed-upon procedures.**
- Parties may request **adjustments to the agreement**, which must be submitted to the notification center for record keeping.

Subaqueous Excavation

A Subaqueous notice is required whenever excavation work occurs under a body of water, including rivers, streams, lakes, or other waterways. The excavator must provide notice to the Member Operators at least 10 working days in advance, not counting the day the notice is submitted, weekends, or holidays. The Tolerance Zone for a Subaqueous Notice is 15 feet on either side of the indicated facility.

Secondary Actions

Requesting an Extension

For **standard excavation or demolition tickets**, if the work takes longer than the original **15 full working days**, an Extension (previously called an “Update” must be requested. An **Extension** can be submitted at any

time during the life of the notice. **Extending a ticket does not refresh paint markings**; if the markings are no longer visible, a **Remark request** must be submitted instead of an Extension.

Remark

For **standard excavation or demolition tickets**, a **Remark** is used when existing utility markings at the job site have been **destroyed, faded, or disturbed** by weather or by someone outside of the excavator's company. Excavators are **responsible for maintaining the markings at their job site** and should ensure that markings remain visible for the duration of the work.

When a Remark is submitted, the system generates a **new ticket** that is sent to all member operators and provides a **new ticket number and expiration date** for the notice. Operators have **three full working days** to respond to a Remark.

Excavation performed before operators have responded is at **the excavator's discretion and risk**. If continuing to work under a prior ticket, the excavator should first confirm that **paint markings are present and clearly visible** before proceeding.

No Show

If an operator fails to provide a positive response within the required timeframe, a **No Show** may be processed. Once a No Show is issued, the affected member operators have **three hours to respond**. A No Show should also be requested if an operator has responded **“No Conflict” or “Not in the Area of Excavation”**, but indicators of underground facilities - such as pedestals, transformers, boxes, or similar structures - are present at the excavation.

If the excavator observes or becomes aware of **indications of an unmarked facility**, excavation or demolition must **not begin** until the excavator provides **additional notice to the notification center** identifying the suspected facility. Once this notice is received, arrangements must be made for the operator to mark the facility **within three hours**.

Resend

The **Resend** action is used when an excavator needs a facility operator to review and respond again to a locate request.

A Resend is typically initiated when a facility operator has posted a **“Marked”** response in Positive

Response, but the excavator:

- Does not observe any markings at the job site, or
- Determines that the markings are unclear, incomplete, or appear inaccurate for the scope of work

By selecting **Resend**, the excavator is requesting that the specific facility operator revisit the locate request and verify or correct their markings.

When submitting a Resend, the excavator should include clear and specific notes describing the issue (e.g., “no marks visible,” “markings do not cover full excavation area,” or “markings inconsistent with site conditions”). This information helps the facility operator understand the concern and respond appropriately.

Important:

- A Resend is directed to a specific facility operator, not all notified members.
- Excavation should not begin until accurate and complete responses have been confirmed through Positive Response.








Extraordinary Circumstances

An **Extraordinary Circumstance** is defined as a situation that makes it **impractical or impossible for an operator to complete facility marking within the normal timeframe of the ticket**. Examples of Extraordinary Circumstance may include **hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, ice, snow, or other acts of God**.

If an Extraordinary Circumstances prevent an operator from marking the location within the required timeframe, the operator must enter **Extraordinary Circumstance (Code 110)** in the **Positive Response System** and provide the **anticipated date and time** when the facility location will be marked.

APWA Color Code

The APWA color code is a standardized system established by the American Public Works Association (APWA) that assigns specific colors to different types of underground utilities. These colors help excavators, locators, and operators quickly identify the type of facility at a job site to ensure safe excavation and prevent damage.

	RED - ELECTRIC POWER LINES
	YELLOW - GAS, OIL STEAM CHEMICAL
	ORANGE - CABLE, COMMUNICATION
	BLUE - POTABLE WATER
	GREEN - SEWER, STORM DRAIN
	WHITE - PROPOSED EXCAVATION
	PINK - TEMPORARY SURVEY MARKINGS
	PURPLE - RECLAIMED WATER

Pre-Marking

If the excavation site cannot be clearly identified within the area described in the notice, the **excavator must pre-mark the site** before the operator performs a locate. Pre-marking must use **WHITE paint, flags, or stakes**; other colors may cause confusion, as utility colors are reserved under the **APWA Uniform Color Code**.

The **location and type of pre-marks** must be included in the locate notice, along with the **description of where the pre-marked area is on the job site**.

Positive Response

Positive Response is an information system that allows **excavators, locators, operators, and other interested parties** to track the status of a locate request until the notice is closed or expires. Before beginning any excavation work, the excavator must **verify that all facility operators have responded** via Positive Response.

Checking Positive Response

- Excavators can check responses by **calling 811** or using **Exactix online**.

- Excavation may begin **before the end of the specified waiting period** if all operators have provided an **appropriate Positive Response**.

Proceeding Without Response

- An operator's failure to respond **does not prohibit excavation**, provided **no visible indicators of a facility** exist (e.g., poles, pedestals).
- If there **are visible indicators of a facility**, the excavator must contact SC811 for a **"No Show"** and allow an additional **three hours** for the operator or locator to mark the facility.
- (See the **No Show** section for additional details.)

Positive Response Codes

- **Open Codes** - indicate that the locator **attempted but did not complete** the locate. **Work cannot begin.**
- **Closed Codes** - indicate the area has been **marked** or that **no underground utilities** exist in the excavation area. **All Closed Codes must be entered before excavation starts.**

Refer to the chart below for the list of **Open and Closed Codes** and their meanings.

OPEN CODES

30 - Locate not complete - unable to contact excavator

31 - Insufficient information - Please call SC811 and provide additional or correct information

40 - Locate not complete - Could not gain access to property

50 - Critical facility not marked. The utility owner or their designated representative must be present during excavation to identify the unmarked facility and/or monitor the excavation

60 - Locator and excavator have agreed and documented marking schedule

85 - Contract locator unable to mark. Member has been notified

90 - Subaqueous facilities 10 days to locate or communication required

110 - Extraordinary circumstances. Communication required

122 - Design request - meeting required

CLOSED CODES

10 - No conflict

11 - Member operator not in area of excavation

20 - Marked

55 - Critical facility marked. The utility owner or their designated representative have contacted the excavator and have agreed to a period that an owner representative must be present during excavation to identify the marked facility and/or monitor the excavation

80 - Facility owner's master contractor is responsible for locating facilities

100 - Homeland Security issue. Request denied. Facility owner shall contact excavator

120 - Design request - Marked

121 - Design request - Facility print provided

123 - Design request - Homeland Security issue. Request denied. The facility owner shall contact excavator

Private Facilities

Private facilities are underground lines or systems that are **not owned or maintained by a utility company that participates in 811**. These lines are typically located **on private property** and run **beyond the public right-of-way** to serve a home, building, or site.

Examples of private facilities may include:

- Electric lines running from the meter to a building, garage, or outdoor equipment
- Gas lines beyond the meter serving grills, pools, or additional structures
- Water or sewer lines from the main service connection to buildings or irrigation systems
- Private communication or data lines
- Lighting, irrigation, or other privately installed underground systems

Member utility operators only mark the facilities they own and maintain. It is the **excavator's responsibility** to identify and arrange for the marking of any **private utilities or facilities** before beginning excavation.

A **list of companies that provide private utility locating services** is available on our website.

Depth of Facilities

The **exact location and depth of underground facilities are not guaranteed**. While member utility operators mark the **approximate horizontal location** of their buried lines, **SC811 does not maintain records of the exact depth or precise placement** of underground facilities.

In many cases, **facility owners may be reluctant to provide depth information**. This is because the depth of buried facilities can **change over time** due to factors such as:

- Erosion
- Soil movement
- Grading or landscaping
- Weather conditions
- Previous excavation or construction activity

Although many utilities follow **standard depth requirements during installation**, they **cannot control changes that occur after installation**. As a result, the current depth of a facility may differ from the original installation depth.

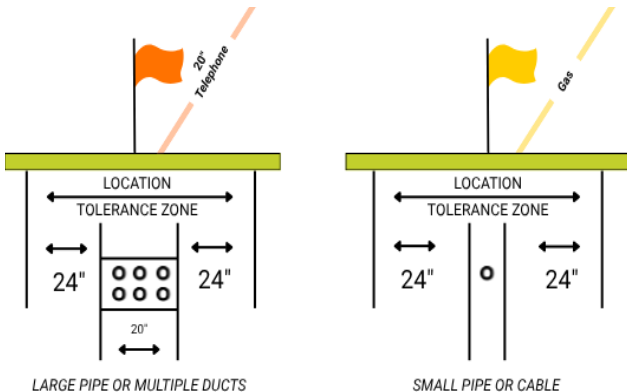
For this reason, excavators should **never rely on an assumed depth** when working near underground facilities.

Whenever excavation must occur **within the tolerance zone of a marked facility**, excavators must use **safe digging practices**, such as hand digging, vacuum excavation, or other non-destructive methods, to carefully expose the facility and prevent damage.

Tolerance Zone and Safe Digging Practices

The **Tolerance Zone** is the area surrounding a marked underground facility where **special care must be taken during excavation or demolition**.

For most excavation activities, the Tolerance Zone extends **24 inches on either side of the utility mark, plus one-half the diameter of the facility (if known)**.



For **subaqueous excavation** (excavation performed in waterways or below the waterline), the Tolerance Zone extends **15 feet on either side of the marked facility** due to the increased difficulty of accurately locating underground facilities in these environments.

Excavators **may not perform excavation within the Tolerance Zone using mechanized equipment** until the facility has been **visually identified** and its precise location confirmed. This process is commonly referred to as **“potholing” or “daylighting”**.

Exposing the Facility

Within the Tolerance Zone excavators must use **non-mechanical or soft digging methods** until the facility has been visually confirmed. Acceptable methods include:

- **Hand digging with appropriate tools**
- **Vacuum excavation or hydro excavation**
- **Other soft digging equipment specifically designed to protect buried facilities**

These methods must be used until the excavator has:

- **Visually identified the precise location of the facility** or

- **Confirmed that no facility is present to the depth of the planned excavation**

Mechanical equipment **may only be used for the initial penetration and removal of pavement or other hard surface materials, and only to the depth of those materials.**

Excavating Parallel to a Facility

When excavation is occurring **parallel to a marked facility within the Tolerance Zone**, the excavator must **visually expose the facility at intervals not exceeding 50 feet** along the excavation path. This helps ensure the facility's location remains known and prevents accidental damage during the excavation process.

Crossing an Existing Facility

When excavation **crosses a marked underground facility**, the excavator must **visually verify the clearance above or below the facility** using hand digging or soft digging techniques at the crossing point. This ensures the facility is clearly identified and protected before mechanical excavation continues.

Protecting and Supporting Exposed Facilities

Once a facility has been exposed, excavators must **exercise due care to protect it throughout the excavation process**. Reasonable precautions must be taken to avoid:

- Weakening the **structural or lateral support** of the facility
- **Penetrating or damaging the facility** or its protective coatings
- Allowing equipment to make contact with the facility

Excavators must also **maintain adequate clearance between the facility and the cutting edge or point of mechanized equipment**, taking into account the limits of control of that equipment.

If a facility becomes **exposed, suspended, or unsupported**, the excavator must **provide appropriate support and protection** to prevent damage. This includes ensuring facilities remain properly supported during excavation, construction, and **backfilling operations** as required to protect the integrity of the facility.

Following these safe digging practices helps **protect underground infrastructure, prevent service disruptions, and reduce the risk of injury or**

property damage.

Marking a Ticket as Complete

Once all excavation or demolition work is finished, the excavator is required to mark the ticket as complete in Exactix. This is done by toggling the “**Work Complete**” button at the top of the notice or by calling **SC811** to report completion. Once a notice is marked complete, no further work may take place under the ticket, and a **new notice must be submitted** for any additional excavation or related work at the same site. Marking tickets complete ensures accurate tracking of work, prevents conflicts with other excavators, and helps maintain safety around all underground facilities.

Damage Reporting

If excavation or demolition results in a damage to a facility, the excavator must take immediate action to ensure safety and proper notification. Simply creating an emergency notice does not satisfy the requirement to report damage. Excavators are responsible for coordinating with SC811, the affected facility operator, and emergency responders when necessary.

Reporting and Coordination

- **Notify SC811 and the facility operator (if known) immediately**, providing the location and nature of the damage.
- **Submit a formal damage report to SC811** as soon as possible.
- Allow the facility operator **reasonable time to perform necessary repairs** before completing excavation or backfilling in the immediate area.
- **Do not backfill or cover the damaged facility** until authorized by the facility operator.
- Repairs must be performed by the **facility operator or qualified personnel authorized by the operator**.

Emergency Situations

If the damage causes the release of **flammable, toxic, or corrosive gases or liquids, electricity, or any condition that poses a risk to life, health, or property**, the excavator must:

- **Immediately notify 911, SC811, and the facility operator (if known)**.
- **Take reasonable measures to protect themselves, others in immediate danger, the**

public, property, and the environment until the operator or emergency responders arrive.

Safe Excavation Practices After Damage

- Maintain caution in the immediate area to prevent further damage or injury.
- Support or protect exposed facilities as needed during excavation or demolition.
- Follow all guidance from the facility operator regarding repair and restoration.

Quick Reference Checklist: Immediate Steps After Facility Damage

1. Notify **SC811** and the facility operator immediately with location and details.
2. Submit a **damage report to SC811**.
3. **Do not backfill** or complete excavation in the affected area until authorized.
4. Allow the operator to repair or coordinate with authorized personnel.
5. If hazardous conditions exist, **call 911, SC811, and the operator** immediately.
6. Take **reasonable measures to protect people, property, and the environment** until help arrives.

Enforcement

A party who believes a violation of **South Carolina Underground Damage Prevention Act** has occurred may file a complaint with the **Attorney General's Office** within **45 days** of the alleged incident.

Complaints can be submitted online at **agcomplaint.sc811.com**. This process applies **only to violations of the Act** and **cannot be used to recover personal damages or repair costs**.



Before You Dig, Make Sure You're Ready.



SC811 Website
Submit tickets &
resources



SC State Law
Know the law before
you dig