

Creating an Effective Marking System

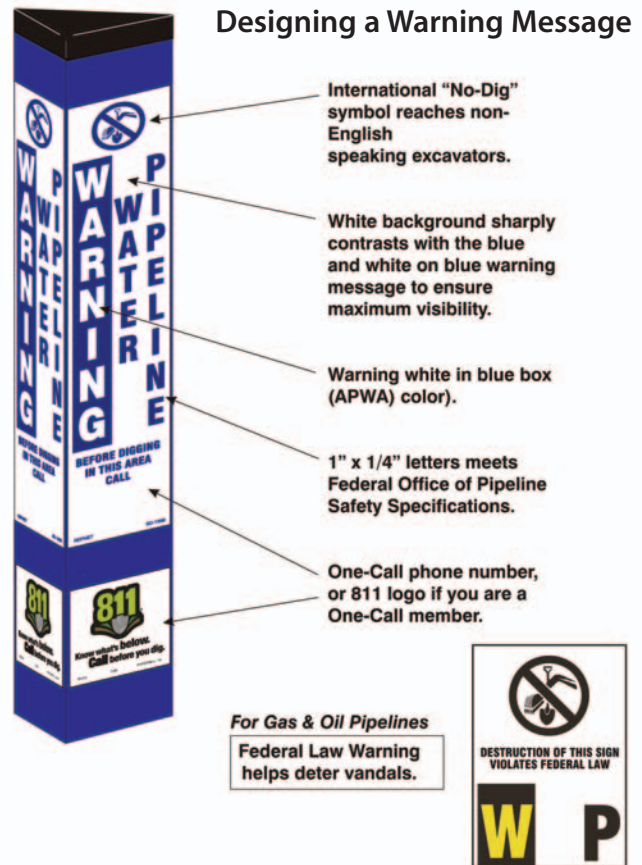
By Scott Landes

President, Rhino Marking and Protection Systems
slandes@RhinoMarkers.com

An effective marking system is vital in preventing damage to buried facilities and avoiding life-threatening accidents relating to excavation. A permanent marking system is on duty 24/7 and is your last defense against third party damage to underground utilities. In the long run, a marking system pays for itself in terms of reduced damages and liabilities.

To design or upgrade an effective permanent marking system, there are several issues you will want to consider:

- **Create a list of all the environments** your system is operating in. i.e. under paved surfaces, landscaped areas, farmland, wooded areas, areas prone to vandalism, and areas used by off-road vehicles. Consider your climate – is the system exposed to extreme heat or cold or strong sunlight?
- **Establish a standard message and color scheme** that conveys all aspects of a warning message. Make sure your message is clear and concise, and use contrasting colors. Take into account non-English speakers by incorporating graphics or including a second language.
- **Visibility is crucial.** Be sure both marker posts and warning messages can be seen from any direction. Drive around your system and make note of how many signs and posts are no longer legible, or are missing.
- **Create a system that is inexpensive and easy to maintain.** Take into account fade resistance - special coatings can extend the life of posts and signs. Also consider vandalism resistance, ease of upgrade and cost of replacement.
- **Create a system that is safe.** If you use a rigid marker or sign, be absolutely sure it is highly visible. This is especially important if ATV riders, snowmobilers, dirt bikers, bicyclist, horseback riders, and/or pedestrians use your right of way. Use flexible posts to reduce risks associated with accidental impacts to your marker.



811 - Time to Upgrade

Now is a perfect time to upgrade your marking system. When you are planning to implement the 811 “Call Before You Dig” message, evaluate your current marking system and learn how to make it more visible, safe and cost-effective.

Whether you are designing a new installation or revamping your current system, costs and maintenance should be considered:

- What are your total annual costs for repairing third party damage to your facilities? What percentage of these damages do you recoup, and at what cost?
- Are third party damages causing customers to lose service and potentially switch to another provider?
- Do you have a maintenance program in place to ensure your permanent markers are legible and visible from anywhere on your right of way?



For More Information

- www.811Marking.com
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