

Comparing Washington One Call Law to Pennsylvania's 7/3/08 by Grant Jensen

Below I've summarized what I found different between the Washington and Pennsylvania One Call laws. This is not intended to be a final document but just a quick review of items that I found after a couple reads of the two laws. It was not my intent to try to determine which law was better only to point out the difference I saw.

- 1) Placing a locate request in Pennsylvania, the call must be placed within five days but not less than three business days and not more than ten days before digging. In Washington it's not less than two business days and not more than ten days of digging. I could not find a provision in the Pennsylvania law for short notice call like we have in the Washington law.
- 2) The Pennsylvania law has the positive call back requirement, Washington doesn't.
- 3) In the Pennsylvania law, I could not find a depth requirement for placing a One Call, in Washington. It's 12" or deeper, so in Pennsylvania I assumed it's anytime you dig, except for tilling of soil for agricultural purposes less than 18" or Department of Transportation crew work in the road/highway right of way up to a depth of 24" removing sediment build-up.
- 4) The Pennsylvania law provides a call for notice of preconstruction meetings before excavation on complex projects (\$400,000 or more) begin.
- 5) In Pennsylvania both the Facility Owner and the Excavator share the cost of operating the One Call Center. In Washington the underground Facility Owner pays for the center based on a per call notification fee.
- 6) The Pennsylvania One Call system is governed by a board of directors, chosen by facility owners. No less than twenty percent of the seats are to be held by municipalities or municipal authorities. The board includes all of the following:
 - The Chairman of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission or designee
 - The Director of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency or designee
 - The Secretary of Labor and Industry or designee
 - The Secretary of Transportation or designee
 - An excavator or excavation industry representative
 - A designer (Engineer) or designer industry representative
- 7) In Washington we turn to the Attorney General to levy fines, in Pennsylvania this is handled by the Auditor General. In the Pennsylvania law it outlines fines for property damage and personal injury or death which range from \$2,500 to \$50,000.
- 8) In Pennsylvania it is the duty of each excavator to report immediately to the facility owner basically any damage done to the facility during excavation and to submit an incident report to the department not more than ten business days after striking or otherwise damaging a facility owner's line.
- 9) The Pennsylvania Law must have been updated recently because it has a reference to the Nationwide One Call Number (811) and a Section that states "persons shall use their best efforts to comply with the Common Ground Alliance best practices."