

Safety & Damage Prevention

...Putting it all together

Stakeholder Advocacy



Stakeholder Advocacy Committee

ABSTRACT: To provide an overview of CGA's Stakeholder Advocacy effort and describe the resources available for local stakeholders in advocacy efforts regarding state damage prevention laws.

Introduction

The Common Ground Alliance (CGA) is a member-driven association dedicated to ensuring public safety, environmental protection, and the integrity of services by promoting effective damage prevention practices. The CGA has established itself as the leading organization in efforts to reduce damages to all underground facilities in North America through shared responsibility among all stakeholders. CGA's Stakeholder Advocacy Committee is proactively working with local stakeholders to educate policymakers about CGA best practices and other resources to positively impact state/federal legislation and/or regulations under consideration.

Background

The CGA Best Practices were originally developed during the 1998/1999 Common Ground Study of One-Call Systems and Damage Prevention Best Practices, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). The best practices are shared among public and private-sector stakeholders involved with and dependent on the safe and reliable operation, maintenance, construction, and protection underground facilities. They cover all phases of an underground infrastructure construction project from planning and design through backfill, including one-call notification, accurate locating and marking of facilities, applicable reporting of damage data, and effective public awareness and education.

The DOT's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) is in the process of developing a rulemaking to enhance one-call and damage prevention laws and enforcement practices as required by the Pipeline Inspection, Protection, Enforcement, and Safety (PIPES) Act of 2006. Once a final rule is promulgated, PHMSA will evaluate if a state's damage prevention program includes authority to enforce its laws and regulations and is doing so effectively, and to what extent the program includes provisions that address the 'Nine Elements' of an effective damage prevention program described in the PIPES Act.

In 2012, CGA established the Stakeholder Advocacy Committee to proactively work with local stakeholders to educate state lawmakers and other authorities regarding use of CGA best practices and other resources in advocacy efforts to positively impact legislation and/or regulations under development. The committee has developed a process for stakeholders to follow when seeking CGA assistance as well as a wide range of supporting materials to help stakeholders develop and implement a legislative and/or regulatory strategy. These resources can be found at www.commongroundalliance.com.

Robust Toolbox of Supporting Materials

CGA provides a broad range of tools, including the CGA Best Practices Manual, 811 Campaign, Damage Information Reporting Tool (DIRT), Locate Accurately Campaign, and a variety of safety videos and other materials to educate and encourage shared responsibility by all stakeholders in damage prevention.

Resources to assist stakeholders who are new to the advocacy game are also available on the CGA website, including a series of case studies from across the country describing success stories related to recent advocacy endeavors told from the perspective of the stakeholders themselves. A brief abstract on the CGA advocacy program is also available for stakeholder advocates, as well as a resource page describing the range of tools available on the website to support local efforts. Background information on CGA as well as a significant amount of PHMSA material is also captured in a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation.

CGA Participation "By Invitation Only"

CGA advocacy is focused on and limited to communication of best practices, and will be conducted primarily by local stakeholders who ask for CGA assistance. The intent is to focus efforts on those states with legislation or regulations under active consideration where use of best practices could contribute to reducing underground damages.