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**California Underground Facilities Safe Excavation Board  
("Dig Safe Board")**

**May 13, 2019**

**Agenda Item No. 4 (Information Item) – Staff Report**

*Discussion on Select Preliminary Investigations*

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***Presenter***

Jason Corsey, Chief of Investigations

***Background***

At the April 15-16, 2019, board meeting, staff proposed to initiate official investigations. The Board concurred. As regulations requiring notification of specified damages will not be in effect until January 1, 2020, staff plans to continue to focus on investigating "No Ticket"/"No Response" events throughout 2019, as discovered through one-call center ticket database searches. The Board requested investigative staff present a recurring discussion item during its meetings.

***Discussion***

Investigative staff has completed approximately 100 preliminary investigations. Below are summaries of three (3) highlighted preliminary investigations for discussion.

**Investigation 1**

On 3/28/19, at 1135 hours, Builders reported to the one-call center that they exposed an unmarked utility line while installing bollard posts, a handhole, and pipe for future fiber optics at the Telcom cabinet adjacent the Union Pacific railway near the intersection of Victoria Ave and Francis Ave.

On 4/22/2019, a Dig Safe Board investigator called Mr. G, of Builders and interviewed him regarding the incident. Builders was installing bollard posts near a Telcom box and was using a post hole digger when they exposed the unmarked fiber conduit which ran right underneath the location for the new posts. Builders reported the exposure to the one-call center. Mr. H, from the Telcom Company, responded in the field. Mr. G stated that the line was not marked because Mr. H said the Telcom Company's internal facility maps had the fiber line in question located 20' outside Builder's delineated area. The line was not located because the Telcom Co did not think it was there. Mr. G stated that the line's PVC coating was damaged but the fiber was fine. Builder repaired the PVC and billed the Telcom Co for the minor repair. The bill has not been paid to Mr. G's knowledge. Mr. G stated his crew added the correct location of the Telcom's fiber to their as-built drawings.

On 4/22/2019, the investigator called Mr. H of the Telcom Co. Mr. H confirmed the same account and stated that their internal maps have been updated with the new facility location. Union Pacific had also been notified of the line's location as it passed through the railroad right-of-way.

On 4/22/2019, Investigator called the on-site contact, Mr. K, of Builders, who was indicated on the fourth and final ticket revision. Mr. K's account matched the one provided by Mr. G and Mr. H.

*Takeaways/Lessons Learned:*

Operators' maps are not always to be relied upon by locaters, excavators, or investigators. In this case it seems everything was done correctly but the exposure of the un-marked line still occurred. The telecommunications provider was able to update the company's maps and notify Union Pacific because Builder's crew noticed the un-marked line and reported it to the one-call center.

Investigation 2

On March 29, 2019, an underground utility hit was reported to the one-call center taking place at 2000 Camanche Road. Representatives from the Construction Co. stated they had called the one-call center prior to starting their excavation. The representatives do not recall receiving a positive response from the Telcom Co, but after waiting over two full work days and not seeing any communication markings they started their excavation. An excavator cut a phone cable taking phone service away from six people.

A review of the one-call center ticket listed three locations for the utility damage: one was a series of Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates ("dig polygons") for a residential area, another was for directions to where the dig polygons indicated, and a description indicating work was in the back area of 2000 Camanche Road. The Telcom Co had initially responded to the ticket with "Clear – No Conflict." The Telcom Co would eventually respond to the utility hit.

Additional review of the One Call Center ticket database system indicated a previous ticket was made on March 4, 2019, at 1653 hours. This previous ticket was made for 2000 Camanche Road. The Telcom Co had responded to the one-call center ticket with a response of "Clear – No Conflict." A Telcom representative was able to provide four pictures for the previous One Call Center ticket. In two of the pictures "No Telcom" was painted on the ground.

*Takeaways/Lessons Learned:*

Be aware of the location(s) listed on tickets. In this particular case, the ticket had three locations listed and the hit location was actually written in the location description. Searching the One Call Center database provided information on a previous ticket that contained the hit address. The ticket had also contained multiple locations. The Telcom Co was not aware of this previous ticket; however when they searched the ticket they were able to produce four pictures of the their company's markings. By pointing out the issue of the locations on the two tickets, the Telcom Co was able to identify a possible problem with their system. Since the address was written within the location description, and not written in the street address, the Telcom Co will review their system

to make sure a location is not misidentified.

### Investigation 3

On 04/10/2019, the Dig Safe Board received notification from the one-call center Ticket W0000000-01W reporting a damaged telephone line and cable TV that was marked per reporting party, Mr. L, Foreman/Excavator.

On 04/11/2019, a Dig Safe Board investigator initiated an investigation. Investigator made phone contact with Mr. L (Note: Mr. L speaks with broken English) to discuss the incident and he related the following in summary:

On 03/26/2019, at approximately 1027 hrs., Mr. L and his crew were near the vicinity of 5624 Shady Dell Rd., CA to replace and old power pole with a new power pole as the old power pole was too old and damaged to hold up the new, bigger transformer that was being replaced. Investigator asked Mr. L if there were any damages sustained to any telephone or cable lines due to any excavation work. Mr. L advised there were no damages to any utility lines and the one-call center must have been mistaken when he called them to explain about the old and damaged power pole that needed to be replaced. Mr. L advised he was not there install a fence but, replace an old power pole with a new one. The investigator asked if there were any utility markings prior to Mr. L and his crew conducting their work. Mr. L stated the ground was properly marked by a locator before their work began. The investigator informed Mr. L about the new Dig Safe Board and the laws and regulations implemented surrounding safe excavation practices. Mr. L stated he appreciates the Dig Safe Board's new program and thanked the investigator for the phone call.

### *Takeaways/ Lessons Learned:*

It appears there may have been a language barrier between Mr. L and the One Call Center when the ticket was written. The information supplied on the "damaged" ticket appeared to be wrong and ultimately revealed no damage to any underground utility lines after speaking with Mr. L by phone. While conducting an investigation, the information on the ticket should only be used as a tool for clarifying information and not as fact.

### Investigation Plan

Staff will continue to attend industry related training events and to investigate "No Ticket/No Response" reports. Staff will also investigate any incidents of Consequence (injury, fatality and disruption), Public Interest (newsworthy, visibility, proximity to locations of interest such as schools, etc.) and/or Policy (those issues of policy importance to the Board) that staff is made aware of. Those found to be in violation of Gov't Code § 4216 et seq. will be treated according to the graduated enforcement guidance in Gov't Code § 4216.19(e) and the Board's Enforcement Philosophy. Staff expects, based on information collected in the process of its preliminary investigations, that the bulk of the violations found as a result of the initial official investigations will result in a warning letter indicating the code section violated and the potential for sanctions for continued violations of Gov't Code § 4216 et seq.