
DIGALERT
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SAFETY SINCE 1976
TM

June 1976, an excavating company hit an 8in High Pressure pipeline on Venice Blvd in Culver City, within minutes a thousand gallons of low-lead gasoline flowed out and ignited. In the end 16,000 gallons of the gasoline was released, 7 buildings destroyed and 9 people died.

Three months later DigAlert® began operations as the Regional Notification Center in Southern California and now serves over 900 utility owner/operators in 9 counties:

Imperial, Inyo, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Ventura



DigAlert® processed over a million tickets in 2025!

Review & Discuss the California Excavation Law and Regulations



1. Definitions
2. Excavator’s Responsibilities
3. Operator’s Responsibilities
4. Consequences
5. Answer your questions

What does ”Excavation” mean?

4216 (g) “**Excavation**” means any operation in which earth, rock, or **other material** in the ground is moved, removed, or otherwise displaced by means of tools, equipment, or explosives in any of the following ways:

1. Grading
2. Trenching
3. Digging
4. Ditching
5. Drilling
6. Auguring
7. Tunneling
8. Scraping
9. Cable or pipe plowing and driving

...Or any other way!





4216 (h) …“**excavator**” means any person, firm, contractor or subcontractor, owner, operator, utility, association, corporation, partnership, business trust, public agency, or other **entity that, with their own employees or equipment, performs any excavation.**

4216 (o) “**Operator**" means any person, corporation, partnership, business trust, public agency, or other **entity that owns, operates, or maintains a subsurface installation.**

4216 (s) “**Subsurface installation”** means any underground pipeline, conduit, duct, wire, or other structure, **except** for non-pressurized sewer lines, non-pressurized storm drains, or other non-pressurized drain lines.

Every operator of a subsurface installation, except the Department of Transportation, **shall become a member** of, participate in, and share in the costs of a regional notification center…(4216.1).

811 Process

Five Steps to a Safer Excavation required by EVERY Excavator



Delineate **Contact 811** **Wait** **Confirm** **Practice Safe Excavation**

Step 1: Delineate

Before notifying DigAlert® **an excavator planning to conduct an excavation shall delineate the area to be excavated** …(4216.2 a).

"**Delineate**" in **white** the location or path of the proposed excavation…(4216 d).

If the area is **not delineated**, an operator may, at the operator's discretion, **choose not to locate and field mark** until the area to be excavated has been delineated (4216.2 a).



Step 2: Contact 811

Except in an emergency, an **excavator planning to conduct an excavation shall notify DigAlert®** of the excavation at least two working days, not including the date of notification and not more than **14 calendar days…** (4216.2 b)

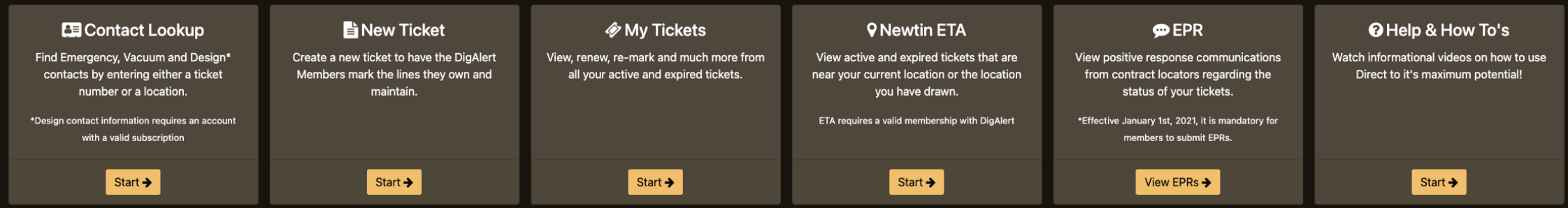
DIRECT

THE FASTLANE TO SAFE DIGGING®

1. Direct.digalert.org
2. DigAlert® App
3. Text 344258 (DIGALT)
4. Call 811

DigAlert® Customer Service Representatives are available Monday – Friday, from 6:00AM to 7:00PM

* excluding state and federal holidays



DIRECT

Need help or have questions?

directsupport@digalert.org

or 951-808-8190

"**Emergency**" means a sudden, unexpected occurrence, involving a clear and imminent danger, demanding immediate action to prevent or mitigate loss of, or damage to, life, health, property, or essential public services (4216 f 1).

Emergency tickets cannot have a start date/time of more than 24 hours from the date/time it is submitted.

Utilities **may charge** the excavator for responding to an emergency ticket, ***if*** deemed that the excavation is not an emergency.



Step 3: Wait

…an excavator **shall not begin excavation** until all operators….**do one of the following**…(4216.3 (a) (1) (A)):

(i) **Locate and field mark** within the area delineated for excavation and, where multiple subsurface installations of the same type are known to exist together and mark the number of subsurface installations.

(ii) To the extent and degree of accuracy that the information is available, **provide information** to an excavator where the operator's active or inactive subsurface installations are located.

(iii) **Advise** the excavator it operates **no subsurface installations** in the area delineated for excavation.



Electronic Positive Response (EPR)

Every operator **shall supply an electronic positive response (EPR)** through DigAlert® before the legal excavation start date and time (4216.3 c 1 A).

EPR means an electronic response from an operator to DigAlert® providing the status **of their obligation to either** mark, provide information or advise of no conflict (4216 e).



Step 4: Confirm Utilities Have Responded

Electronic Positive Response (EPR) Information

You can check (+Response) *before* the legal start date and time by:

1. Texting PRESP & the ticket number to **344258** (DIGALT).
2. Download our free app and select **+**Check Electronic Positive Response.
3. Visit **www.digalert.org**



The excavator may begin excavation ***before*** the legal excavation start date and time ***if*** the operator has completed one of the three requirements: locate and field mark, provide information or advise of no conflict (4216.2 g 2)

Step 5: Safe Excavation Practices

…*if* an excavation is **within the tolerance zone** of a subsurface installation, the excavator **shall determine the exact location** of the subsurface installations in conflict with the excavation **using hand tools**…(4216.4 a 1)

"**Tolerance zone**" means 24 inches on each side of the field marking or the exterior of the pipe placed by the operator…(4216 u).



Ways to Expose Underground Facilities

An excavator may use a **vacuum** excavation device to expose subsurface installations **within the tolerance zone** *if* the excavator has **informed** DigAlert® of their intent to use a vacuum excavation device when obtaining a ticket… (4216.4 2 A)

An operator **not agreeing** to the use of a vacuum excavation device **shall include that information on their EPR.**



Ways to Expose Underground Facilities

1. Equipment is a handheld percussive pneumatic, electric, or hydraulic hammer weighing less than 40lbs.
2. Bit width no less than 4 inches wide with rounded edges.
3. Classification of soil within the tolerance zone is classified by CalOsha as type A or type B.
4. The bit edge shall be placed parallel, not perpendicular, to the orientation of the subsurface installation as indicated by the field mark.
5. This type of equipment cannot be used if the installation type is marked as **communications**, alarm or signal lines, cables, or conduit, street lighting, or traffic signal.





If the **exact location** of the subsurface installation **cannot be determined by hand excavating** contact the operator to provide additional information…

The operator shall provide relevant existing additional information to the excavator within one working day…(4216.4 b).

When the excavation is proposed **within 10 ft of a high priority subsurface installation,** the operator shall notify the excavator **to set up an onsite meeting** *before* the legal start date and time…(4216.2 c).

"High Priority Subsurface Installation"

1. High-pressure natural gas pipelines with normal operating pressures greater than 415kPA gauge (60psig)
2. Petroleum pipelines
3. Pressurized sewage pipelines
4. High-voltage electric supply lines, conductors, or cables that have a potential to ground of greater than or equal to 60kv
5. Hazardous materials pipelines that are potentially hazardous to workers or the public if damaged (4216 j)

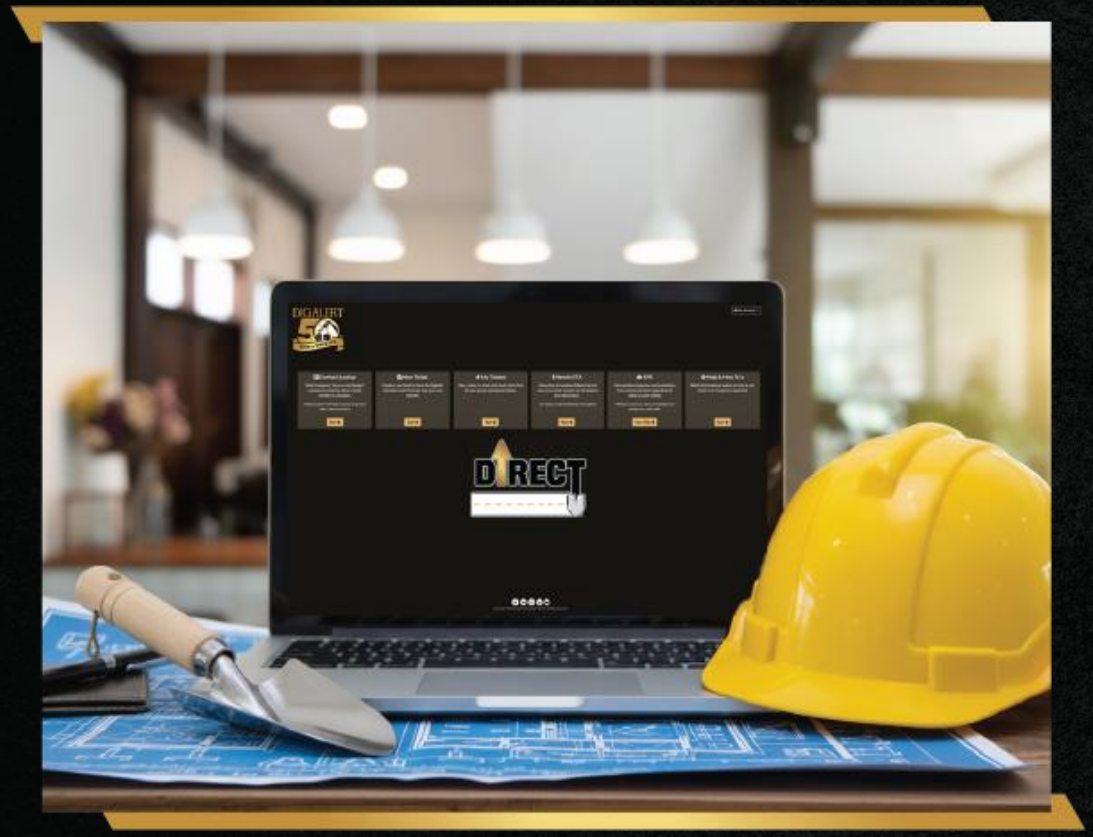
Operators & Excavators Must have Current and Valid Contact Information

Excavators must have a name, telephone number and an e-mail address the entire duration of the ticket…
19 CCR § 4401

Operators must maintain a name, telephone number and e-mail address and inform DigAlert® of any changes…
19 CCR § 4003



Ticket Management



A ticket shall be **valid for 28 calendar days from the date it was issued.** *If* work continues **beyond 28 calendar days**, the excavator **shall renew** the ticket with DigAlert®…(4216.2 e).

If a ticket obtained by an excavator expires but work is ongoing, the excavator **shall immediately cease excavation**, contact DigAlert® and **get a new ticket pursuant to subdivision (b), and may not resume excavation until the owner/operator has located and field mark, provide information, or advise of no conflict.** (4216.2 i).

Ticket Management

Requesting Remarks

If the **field marks are no longer reasonably visible**, an excavator **shall**…request for **remarks** (4216.3 b).

1. Redelineate.
2. Stop Excavation.
3. Wait 2 working days, not including the date of notification for operators to respond.

Return Trip Tickets

If an excavator needs to have a member(s) respond to the site for any reason *other* than a damage, exposed, or re-mark, the excavator will request a Return Trip ticket.

An example: EPR response states no access to site, the excavator provides the access code on the Return Trip Ticket.

A damage is a break, leak, nick, dent, gouge, groove, or other damage to an underground line. ***If* an excavator discovers or causes a damage to a high priority line or there is escape of product from a gas or hazardous liquid line, the excavator must contact 911,** UNLESS the excavator is the operator of the underground line. Immediately after notifying 911, notify the operator and submit a damage ticket through DigAlert® within 48 hours (4216.4 c).



Aftermath of a damage where there was an escape of gas.

Enforcement Agency of California Government Code 4216

Underground Safety Board - https://energysafety.ca.gov/what-we-do/undergroundsafetyboard/

Email - digboard@energysafety.ca.gov

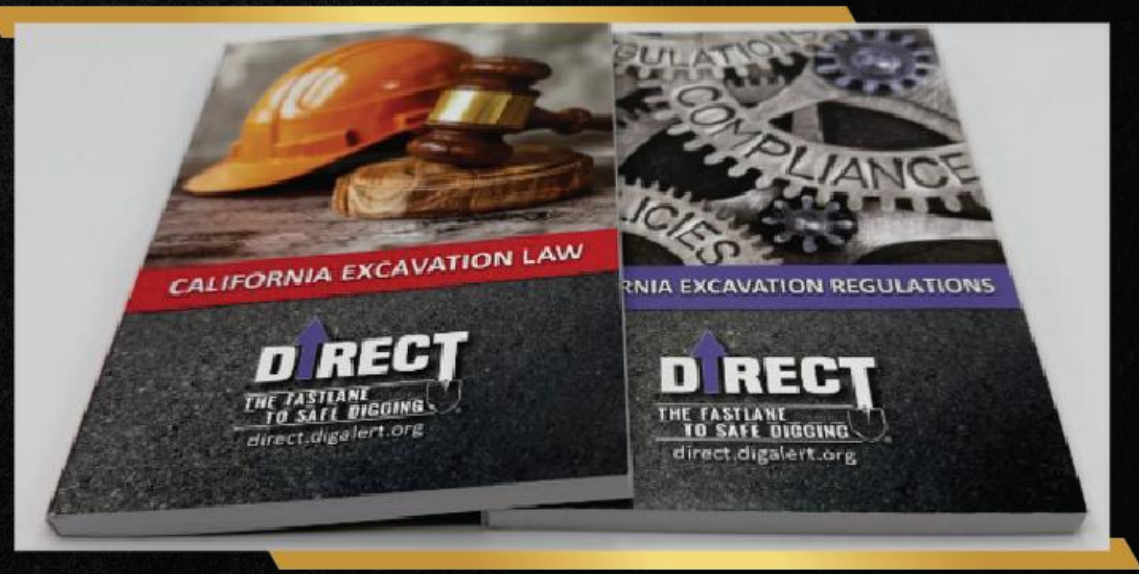
California 811

Underground Safety Board

1. Coordinate education and outreach activities
2. Develop standards
3. Investigate possible violations of 4216
4. Enforce 4216

Consequences - 4216.6

Any operator or excavator who negligently violates 4216 can be fined up to **$10,000** or who knowingly and willfully violates 4216 can be fined up to **$50,000** and if knowingly and willfully violates 4216 and it results in the escape of any flammable, toxic, or corrosive gas or liquid can be fined up to **$100,000**.



Other Enforcement Agencies

Attorney General	CSLB
District Attorney	PUC
Permitting Agency	State Fire Marshal

Upcoming Regulations

1. Planning and Design (P&D) Requests
2. Ticket Volumes - **when an excavator must give more than a two-day notice of their intent to dig.**
3. Facilitating Exchange of Information
4. Notification to California Native American Tribes

Become Involved!

Enroll in the Underground Safety Board E-filing System

California Natural Resources Agency