

## **TRANSACTION RECORD (TR 2009-09)**

**Purpose:** Vacuum Excavation

**Task Team:** Dennis Jarnecke (Co-Chair, Gas Distribution), Phil Baca (Gas Transmission), Dan Bradley (Locator), Don Heyer (One Call), Bob Chisholm (Co-Chair, One Call), Andy Lund (Engineering), Bill Johns (Engineering), Murvyn Morehead (Public Works) and Allen Gray (Road Builder).

**Transaction Record Opened:** February 2009

**Wording Approved by Best Practices Committee:** July 15, 2010

**Final Wording to Be Reviewed by Board of Directors:** September 10, 2010

**Final Practice Wording to Appear in Best Practices Version 8.0\*\***

### **PRACTICE NEW PRACTICE:**

#### **Definition: Vacuum Excavation**

Vacuum excavation is defined as a means of soil extraction through vacuum; water or air jet devices are commonly used for breaking the ground.

[As part of the final TR, there should be a proposal that a definition of "Vacuum Excavation" be included in the Glossary. Once the definition is in the Glossary, it can be removed from this Best Practice.]

#### **Practice Statement:**

Vacuum excavation, when used appropriately, is an efficient, safe and effective alternative to hand digging within the designated underground facility tolerance zone. Use of equipment must also follow State/Provincial Laws and/or Local Ordinances.

**Practice Description:** The safe exposure of underground facilities within the tolerance zone is essential to damage prevention. Site conditions may make the use of hand tools to expose underground facilities difficult or even impractical. Vacuum excavation is often an appropriate alternative. Locates must be obtained prior to the commencement of work (Best Practice 5-1).

Many underground facility owners/operators have specific criteria for safe excavation/exposure practices around their facilities. Some underground facility owners/operators accept vacuum excavation as equivalent to hand excavation for exposing their facilities and others have restrictions on its use.

Vacuum excavation is an appropriate method of excavating safely around underground facilities provided that: the equipment has been specifically designed and built for this purpose; the equipment is operated by a worker trained and experienced in its operation; the equipment is operated in accordance with practices that provide appropriate levels of

worker and public safety and prevent damage to buried facilities; and use of the equipment complies with state/provincial laws and/or local ordinances.

*\*\*Best Practices 8.0 to be published March 2011.*