Year End 2022

DigAlert Newsline

Underground Service Alert of Southern California
2022 IN REVIEW

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21st Millionth Ticket

October 26th was a momentous day in DigAlert’s history – it had only been 355 days since the center had taken its 20 millionth ticket. Considering it took 12 years to take 1 million tickets, taking 1 million in less than a year is historic. Don Bartley from Hillcrest Contracting was just getting a ticket for removing and replacing ramps, curbs, gutters and sidewalk at an intersection in San Bernardino. He had planned his work well in advance of the date he wanted to begin work. Little did he know that his fortuitous timing netted him the 21st millionth ticket. He was rewarded with $811 and tickets to an Anaheim Ducks game. Who will get the 22nd millionth? If you get a ticket every time before you dig it could be you.
Well, Helen Keller wasn’t a DigAlert member, this statement could be the slogan for safe digging. Working together excavators and operators of underground lines can do much to complete a safe excavation. When excavators plan their work in advance, delineate their actual work site, get a DigAlert ticket up to 14 days in advance and hand expose lines in conflict they are taking the first steps of a safe excavation. With excavators providing these first steps operators can mark their lines in conflict and provide their electronic positive response in a timely manner. This is what working together can achieve. If there are issues during the project working together gets more accomplished than pointing fingers and blaming each other. Listening to many discussions from industry groups it seems that many times a line is drawn in the sand and the parties aren’t willing to work with each other. This type of animosity does little for the goal of safe excavations. When the Dig Safe Act of 2016 was passed it included new language “Each excavator, operator, or locator shall communicate with each other and respect the appropriate safety requirements and ongoing activities of the other parties, if known, at an excavation site.” (4216.4d). Excavators have a job to do. Operators want to protect their lines. Working together this can be accomplished. Not working together, little will get done.
Underground Infrastructure Directorate (formerly the Dig Safe Board)

2022 found the California Underground Facilities Safe Excavation Board moving from the auspices of the State Fire Marshall to the Office of Energy Safety. The Board was busy in 2022 holding workshops on planning and design, safety lessons learned, pot holing and abandoned lines. There was a virtual town hall discussing the changes to the fees the agency charges owners of underground lines. A new e-filing system was set up so those that want to be notified of future workshops, town halls, and meetings would receive the pertinent information.

The Underground Safety Board started earnest enforcement in 2022 for both excavators and owners of underground lines not following the requirements of California Government Code section 4216. Following the requirements of 4216 will ensure you don’t receive a notice of probable violation (NOPV) and that your project is completed safely.

Sign up for notifications of future workshops, town halls, and meetings
Ron Olitsky Extra Mile

The 2022 Ron Olitsky Extra Mile Award winner was Sue Erbe. Sue Erbe started her career at DigAlert on May 11th, 1998, as a Customer Service Representative (CSR). In 2002 she was promoted to Member Services and started working in the front office. In 2008, she was appointed Treasurer by the Board of Directors. In 2011, due to her love of operations became Assistant Manager where she remained until her untimely passing on April 5th, 2022.

Sue had a major impact on the centers operation and drove the center forward every day. Her commitment was second to none. When she started as a CSR, she quickly became the top ticket taker DigAlert ever saw. Then as the Assistant Manager and Treasurer she started her day between 3-4am and ending the day around 3-4pm. She was the hardest working employee one could ever find. Sometimes too hard, too motivated, and sometimes her expectations were too high but even with that it always made everyone want to do better.

She was responsible for numerous changes and improvements internally throughout the years. She was also the DigAlert “mom”. She was someone who didn’t listen to you because she had to, she did because she cared. She worked as hard as she could to be the best at everything she did and for her family.

The impact she had on the center and DigAlert will be felt forever, her loss was too soon and will leave a sadness on all that had the pleasure of working with her.

The Ron Olitsky Extra Mile Award was created to honor DigAlert’s former President Ron Olitsky who passed away in 2005. Ron spent 25 years with DigAlert and was instrumental in the creation of the Common Ground Alliance and served on its board. He was actively involved in the One Call Systems International, One Calls of America and the California Regional Common Ground Alliance. He loved traveling both for work and personally, was an avid runner, equestrian and animal lover. His untimely death sent shockwaves throughout the industry. His impact on the “Call Before You Dig” community and message cannot be measured. The award is for an individual or company who show true dedication to efforts that enhance underground damage prevention activities.

To nominate an individual or a company that has shown true dedication to efforts that enhance DigAlert’s underground damage prevention activities or has served DigAlert over a long period of time and whose impact has left their mark in a positive and memorable way, make your nomination by July 1st, 2023.

Make a nomination for the Ron Olitsky Extra Mile Award
Deadline is July 1st, 2023

MAKE A NOMINATION
New Ticket Types

The Ticket Continuity Committee made up of members from both USA North and DigAlert’s board agreed to these different ticket types and delivery format changes in October of 2021. We gave members 15 months to adjust their systems as these changes go into effect 1-1-23. Splitting the ticket type of damage/exposed will assist the Underground Safety Board in knowing which tickets are damages that may need to be investigated. A new ticket type of Return Trip was created to give operators time to respond to an excavator’s need to have a member come back on site for any reason other than no response and/or re-mark. An example of a Return Trip Ticket would be the excavator checks their ticket and sees it hasn’t been marked due to no delineation and they contact the center to say it’s marked now the ticket goes out and the excavator is expecting an immediate response from the operators. This ticket type will allow the operator time to get back out to the job site without having to drop everything to respond immediately.

Here are the ticket types effective 1/1/2023:

- AMND – (Amendment tickets). For all reasons other than listed below that is not requesting any members to respond, for example: correcting a ticket, adding more information, clarifying the location, etc.
- CNCL – (Cancel tickets). When the ticket is being canceled.
- DMGE – (Damaged line ticket). **When the excavator states there is a damaged line and requests members to respond.**
- EXPD - (Exposed tickets). **When the excavator states there is an unmarked exposed line and requests the members to respond to be identified.**
- NEW – (New tickets). New first time tickets. The revision number will always be 00A or 00B.
- NRSP – (No Response tickets). When the excavator states that any or all members failed to respond by the work date and time on the ticket.
- RNEW – (Renewal tickets). Tickets where the work is continuing past 28 calendar days.
- REMK – (Re-mark requested tickets). When the excavator requests any or all members to remark their lines. Also extends the ticket for 28 calendar days.
- RTRN - (Return Trip requested). **When the excavator states they need any or all members to respond to the site for any reason other than listed above. This ticket type will reset the legal notice for members required to respond back to the site.**

For more information regarding ticket types check out our documentation

DOCUMENTATION
Introduced in 2019, DigAlert Direct has had a huge impact on the percentage of tickets done online. 2019 ended with about 56% of tickets being done online. In 2022 the center had over 72% of its tickets done online. Don’t think DigAlert Direct is for you because it’s too techie. There are how to videos and even online training to help you input your tickets online. Don’t be intimidated. Try it today. But we’ll understand if you want to keep talking to our friendly, helpful staff. They are the best!

Create, renew, or request remarks for your tickets online today
24 hours a day, 7 days a week
DigAlert has developed a new online training program. This self-paced training takes the user through DigAlert’s History, the importance of damage prevention, planning the job, preparing the job, protecting the job, and proceeding with the job. This new Learning Management System will be available by the end of the 1st quarter of 2023.

There will also be a monthly curated session of the on-line training. Check events on the DigAlert website to sign up.

If you want to have an in person presentation about the 5 steps to a safe excavation and answers to your questions, contact Amber at amber@digalert.org to schedule.

Every month on the 2nd Thursday DigAlert hosts a webinar on the 811 Process. Attendees receive a Starbucks e-gift card and could win a Home Depot e-gift card up to $100.

All training options are FREE!
While other states have digging seasons, it’s evident that Southern California has digging all year round.
Safe digging is everyone’s responsibility.

Beneath the surface and hidden from view are gas lines, water lines, cable lines and other utilities.

If you don’t know exactly where they are, your digging could cause an explosion, disruption to services, harm to the general public, and injuries — maybe even death. So, be safe...

Contact Direct.DigAlert.Org Before You Dig.

It’s fast
It’s easy
It’s free

& It’s the law!