

2009 State Damage Prevention Program Grants Final Report
Funding Opportunity Number: DTPH56-09-SN-0001
CFDA Number: 20.720

Award Number: *DTPH56 – 09 –G-PHPS09*

Project Title: *Dig Safely New York State Damage Prevention*

Date Submitted: *3/31/2010*

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Specific Objective(s) of the Agreement

Under this grant award, Dig Safely New York will implement a pilot program to measure the effects tolerance zone markings have in reducing damages caused by unsafe digging in the tolerance zone.

Workscope

Under the terms of this agreement, the Grantee will address the following elements listed in 49 USC §60134 through the actions it has specified in its Application.

Element (8): A process for fostering and promoting the use, by all appropriate stakeholders, of improving technologies that may enhance communications, underground pipeline locating capability, and gathering and analyzing information about the accuracy and effectiveness of locating programs.

Accomplishments for the grant period (Item 1 under Agreement Section 9.02 Final Report: “A comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives established for the period.”)

The Tolerance Zone Project was met with some delay as distribution was postponed until July 1, 2009; however, the pilot program concluded by the end of November with 60,447 tolerance zone markings being performed. The original proposal called for completion by the end of August; however, delay in printing and obtaining printing supplies and a lower volume of location requests pushed back the target through November.

Additionally damage data was not available until the end of January to provide analysis on the outcome of the pilot. Aside from the setback in timing, the objective of 60,000 locates was accomplished and the results have been accumulated.

Quantifiable Metrics/Measures of Effectiveness (Item 2 under Section 9.01 Project Report: “Where the output of the project can be quantified, a computation of the cost per unit of output.”)

In initiating the Tolerance Zone Pilot program our intention was to measure the effects tolerance zone markings have in reducing damages caused by unsafe digging in the tolerance zone. Our goal to identify the 24-inch tolerance zone on 60,000 gas location requests through the use of tolerance zone markers was accomplished during July 1 - November 31, 2009 in the territories served by New York State Gas and Electric (NYSEG) and Rochester Gas and Electric (RG&E). Leaving a visual reference marker indicating the actual width of the tolerance zone for the excavator at the excavation site reinforced our tolerance zone education, and aided in utilization of best practices when digging in the tolerance zone. I have included a photo of the prototype grass markers in the attachment of this final grant report.

In assessing the data I have provided analysis based on the two service territories. Damage comparisons between July – November 2008 and July – November 2009 have produced mixed results. Looking first at the NYSEG area, several key factors indicate several success factors supporting the use of the tolerance zone markers. First, location requests in the territories saw an increase during the pilot program’s implementation months. In addition to the increased number of locations, damages were reduced below the 2008 numbers (see figure below).

NYSEG Results			
Year	Locates	Damages In Tolerance Zone	Tolerance Zone Damages per 1000
July-November 2008	26283	24	0.913
July-November 2009	32182	22	0.683

Conversely the RG&E territory saw trends that reflected the exact opposite. Location requests in the territories saw a decrease during the pilot program’s implementation months. In addition to the decrease in the number of locations, damages increased above the 2008 numbers (see figure below).

RG&E Results			
Year	Locates	Damages In Tolerance Zone	Tolerance Zone Damages per 1000
July-November 2008	33882	45	1.32
July-November 2009	29315	49	1.67

The success or failure of this program cannot be assessed only by the damage numbers. Given the small sampling of the pilot program determining any indication on the success or failure of the tolerance zone markers is difficult to quantify based on the mixed results. The positives of the program have been the feedback we have heard from an awareness standpoint. Dig Safely New York, NYSEG and RG&E all received positive feedback based on this visual reference. Outlining the actual width of the tolerance zone (24-inches plus half the width of the facility in NY) to the excavator has led to many positive interactions regarding the rules associated with digging near underground facilities. Having this reference, acted as a reminder that no mechanized equipment can be used in this area until the facility has been properly exposed through the use of hand tools or vacuum excavation. The placement of tolerance zone markers provides a reminder to the excavator of the rules and regulations established in NY.

Included in this final report a PowerPoint presentation has been provided which has an interview with Lenny Perfetti, Supervisor, Gas Engineering, NYSEG / RG&E who provides his insight into the project and how the project has impacted his companies’ damage prevention program moving forward. Additionally the program has provided some valuable lessons and has led to the development of a template that locators can use to paint the tolerance zone markings on the job site. These templates provide a multi-use template that locators can utilize without any other supplies other than paint. It was the intention of this pilot program to provide a damage prevention tool that would assist in reducing damages as a result of unsafe digging in the tolerance zone. Collectively the damage results may seem inconclusive as to the pilot programs impact on tolerance zone damage; however, the awareness the tool has created has provided enough results that NYSEG, RG&E and other LDC’s in NY are exploring the use of tolerance zone markings in 2010 and beyond.

Issues, Problems or Challenges (Item 3 under Section 9.01 Project Report: “The reasons for slippage if established objectives were not met.”

As indicated above the Grant did experience some delay. The pilot program was scheduled to run from April through August 2009 however based on delays in acquiring the necessary paper/tyvek for the tolerance zone markers, they were not distributed until July 1st. This delay set back the pilot program and as a result the proposed 60,000 locations were not completed until the end of November. Finally the Damage data was not made available until February 2010. Aside from these setbacks, the pilot program concluded with the desired sample of locations.

Final Financial Status Report

The final financial report has been sent as a separate attachment to the AA

Requests of the AOTR and/or PHMSA

“No actions requested at this time” Note CD containing Presentation on Pilot Program results will be delivered via USPS.

