

Contractor's Guide

*Understanding your role
in utility relocations*



Effective utility coordination leads to many tangible benefits—helping keep construction costs in line and projects on schedule, as well as promoting collaborations that make the process move more smoothly and efficiently for all.



“Mn/DOT is realizing clear benefits from its investment in improved utility coordination. We are identifying utilities earlier and have improved our communication and collaborations with utility owners. It’s making a difference.”

MARILYN REMER / UTILITIES ENGINEER / MN/DOT

Effective utility coordination helps reduce claims

In 2005, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) launched a new utility coordination process with the goal of proactively coordinating utilities to minimize project delays, construction costs, and utility-related contractor claims.



Since then, utility-related contractor claims at Mn/DOT have decreased significantly. Construction engineers also report fewer delays in the field.

Contractors continue to play an important role

While more utility relocations are taking place before construction begins, it is not always possible to complete all utility relocations in advance. Contractors will continue to play an important role in helping facilitate successful utility relocations.

Resources

Visit www.dot.state.mn.us/utility/ for more information:

- Mn/DOT Utilities Manual
- Mn/DOT Permit Information

Why aren't all utility relocations done in advance of construction?

The Mn/DOT 15-step utility coordination process encourages early identification of utilities and, when possible, relocation before construction. However, it is not always possible or practical to complete all utility relocations before construction begins (e.g., a utility facility is located directly below the pavement the contractor will remove). The contract special provisions include schedules for utility relocations.

Why isn't GPS required for utility locations?

Minnesota Statutes, section 216D.04, requires information regarding the general location, type, size, and utility quality level of affected utilities to be included in all construction plans that contain excavation. The statute does not require GPS location information.

Preconstruction



Work on utility relocations begins early in the design process and continues with the development of utility relocation plans and contract special provisions. Contractors are responsible for understanding plans and contract special provisions and following them in the field.

Plans include relocation information

As part of the request for bids, Mn/DOT includes a utility tabulation sheet in the plans that documents whether each facility will be adjusted, relocated, or left as is. In cases that involve significant utility work, Mn/DOT may develop plan sheets that depict the planned utility facility relocations.

Contract special provisions provide direction for contractors

Mn/DOT provides information that is as accurate and specific as possible. In addition to assisting bidders with bid proposal preparation, this information helps contractors plan their operations to avoid damage and disruption to utility facilities and prepare their own project construction schedules accordingly.

Utility special provisions in the contract make the Mn/DOT contractor aware of activities that will occur within the project limits during the life of the project and will require mutual coordination between the utility owner and the Mn/DOT contractor.

Contract special provisions 1507 and 1803 include utility coordination information for contractors.

1507

Mn/DOT contract **special provision 1507** contains coordination information for all utility facilities to be moved concurrently with contractor operations, including:

UTILITY CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of utility, contact person, phone, fax, and e-mail for all utility owners that have facilities located within the project limits, including ones whose facilities are not affected

DESCRIPTION

Written description of utility relocations, adjustments, and other factors, as necessary, to supplement information on the utility tabulations

RESTRICTIONS

Restrictions such as seasonal restrictions for taking a facility out of service or for working around or protecting facilities

RELOCATION SCHEDULE

The anticipated number of working days and/or the specific calendar completion date for individual relocations, including information from the relocation schedule that can help the Mn/DOT contractor determine the amount of lead time a utility owner will need to complete a specific relocation

1803

Mn/DOT contract **special provision 1803** contains all of the work that Mn/DOT contractors are required to perform to accommodate a relocation, such as clearing and grubbing by a certain date, providing for material delivery, or excavating a specified area to final grade.

Is a permit required for utility relocations?

Yes, the utility owner is responsible for receiving an approved Mn/DOT permit in advance of any utility relocation. The permit helps ensure that the utility will not conflict with project construction, other future Mn/DOT projects, or federal, state, or local laws, rules, policies, and regulations. Utility contractors must keep their approved permit on site while they are completing their work.

What are Gopher State One Call requirements?

Minnesota Statutes, section 216D.04, sub. 1a, requires that the location information the state obtains from affected utility owners be depicted on the final plan used for the bid or contract along with the utility quality level of that information. This information must be updated no more than 90 days before completion of the final plan for bid or contract.

State law also requires that an excavator must call Gopher State One Call (651-454-0002 or 1-800-252-1166) at least 48 hours, excluding weekends, holidays, and emergencies, before digging.

Construction



During construction, the contractor, Mn/DOT construction personnel, and utility owners work together to ensure smooth utility relocation.

Contractors attend preconstruction and other meetings

Minnesota Statutes, section 216D.04, requires at least one preconstruction meeting to communicate the project construction and coordinate utility relocation. The meeting offers project participants the opportunity to review and discuss the proposed sequence of operations, raise and resolve concerns about the overall construction plan, and talk about the work that the contractor may need to do before utility owners can complete their relocations. Mn/DOT construction also may organize other meetings that involve the utility owners and the contractor.

Communication is key

Effective coordination requires communication and participation by all parties. Through early and thorough coordination, the utility coordination process helps to reduce the number of field issues and prevent delays. The contractor is responsible for keeping Mn/DOT informed about any issues with utility relocations.

Mn/DOT and contractors work together throughout the process

Collaboration between Mn/DOT and contractors is critical to the project's success.

For example, a schedule for the utility relocation is outlined before construction begins. Using the relocation plan and the schedule, Mn/DOT works with utility owners to set a more exact schedule for relocations and coordinates the timing of utility relocations with contractor activities. This collaboration supports more effective coordination.

If issues arise in the field, meetings and ongoing communication throughout the project help promote their resolutions.

Some important points to remember include the following:

CHANGES

A change in Mn/DOT project plans during construction may impact utility relocations.

If the contractor requests the utility to make moves or changes to do work solely for the contractor's benefit or convenience, the contractor must gain the utility owner's acceptance of the change and must pay any extra cost for that work.

NOTIFICATION

The contractor is responsible for notifying Mn/DOT immediately regarding any potential delays.

QUESTIONS

As a contractor, if you have any questions about utility issues, contact the Mn/DOT construction group representative.

Why is early notification of any utility issue critical?

Utility delay claims represent some of the most significant financial impacts on the project's schedule and budget. Early notification of any utility issue helps resolve those issues as soon as possible, so that they do not delay work on a project.

Effective communication and coordination among Mn/DOT, the contractor, and utility owners can lead to win-win solutions for all involved.

What happens if a utility owner does not cooperate?

Contact Mn/DOT immediately if there are issues with utility owners. Most issues can be resolved through communication. Mn/DOT also has developed a dispute resolution process to help ensure communication and improved resolution in times of misunderstanding or conflict.



www.dot.state.mn.us/utility/