

# CITY OF HIALEAH



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## STREETS DEPARTMENT

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**TO:** Utility Companies and Contractors Performing Work within the  
City of Hialeah

**FROM:** City of Hialeah Streets Department

**SUBJECT:** Utility Damage Prevention -- Soft-Dig Policy

**DATE:** April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020

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Underground work, especially directional boring, has considerably increased in the last few years. It has brought us a lot of technology, expanded our telecommunication options, and provided certain neighborhoods access to utilities they did not have access to in the past. The new underground infrastructure has brought the City of Hialeah resident's a myriad of benefits; however, it has also brought significant problems. In the last few months, contractors performing underground work have caused considerable amount of damage to City infrastructure. These damages have led to interruptions of service and impacted the City's finances.

There are numerous unforeseen challenges that await contractors planning to dig, drill, or directional bore. One of the most critical challenges is locating existing underground infrastructure. It takes time, dedication, skill, and up-to-date technology to safely and efficiently locate existing infrastructure.

The law requires for contractors to call Sunshine 811 - Call Before You Dig, a nationwide utility locating service, before performing any digging, drilling, and/or directional bore operation. However, to avoid catastrophic mistakes, the City of Hialeah Streets Department has established new requirements for digging, drilling, and directional bore operations taking place within its city limits.

Effective immediately, all contractors performing underground work within the City of Hialeah, whether by digging, drilling, and/or directional bore, must first have all utilities marked by Sunshine 811 - Call Before You Dig and then verified with their own locating device. Once located, the contractor must expose the utilities in the vicinity of, and/or crossed by, the new utility, via soft-dig, hand digging, or any other safe similar procedure. "Soft-dig" refers to a method of removing terrain (soil, sand, mud, dirt, limerock, rocks, etc.) from around a buried utility using hydro-vacuum excavation and

exposing the sub-terrain infrastructure without causing any damage to the utility lines and having minimal environmental impact. Upon exposing the utility(s), the contractor must notify the City of Hialeah Streets Department and Public Works Department so inspectors can visit the jobsite and inspect the City utilities for damages. No backfill or final restoration operation may take place until the inspectors inspect the utilities and sign off the "Soft-Dig Underground Utility Verification Inspection" field on the Streets Department permit.

Preventing injury to persons or property, avoiding the interruption of services resulting from damage to an existing underground utility and being proactive on the jobsite is essential and must be the contractor's main priority. Even minor abrasions to a line may cause corrosion and eventual line failure. This is why it is imperative for contractors to report any nick, scrape, scratch or hit of any utility line to the utility owner. If utility(s) were to be struck, the contractor must stop work and immediately report it to the utility owner so they can send a representative to assess the damage.

Your adherence and compliance to this policy is mandatory and greatly appreciated.

Approved by:

  
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Jose Sanchez, Director of Streets Department

4/14/20  
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Date