



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **BC 1 Call urges homeowners to click or call before tackling spring projects during isolation**

**(Vancouver, BC - April 1, 2020)** - BC 1 Call is urging homeowners to click or call before they dig to avoid damaging underground infrastructure. With so many British Columbians staying home to practice safe physical distancing, many are taking advantage of the spring weather to get outside in their yard and tackle home improvement projects. Damage and service disruptions can be avoided if residents follow the necessary procedures by calling BC 1 Call to determine what utility lines are in their desired dig sites.

"There is a great deal of uncertainty at the moment amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and we understand the desire to get outside in your yards and take advantage of the spring weather. However, it is imperative that you know what is beneath you before you do," says Chris Hyland, President & CEO, BC 1 Call. "In addition to service disruptions, the unnecessary damage could pull emergency resources, such as fire and first responders, away from areas where they are critically needed at a time like this."

Whether a homeowner is planning to build a retaining wall, plant a tree, or put in fence posts, they need to click or call to request a free underground utility locate on what infrastructure is in their desired dig site before starting any job. Utilities can include services such as telecommunications, water, sewage, and natural gas lines.

"Taking the time to submit a locate request to BC 1 Call is critical to your safety, and the safety of your neighbours. Let's remember that many more people are home right now relying on their gas, heat, internet and water supplies," says Hyland. "Also, if a line is damaged and repairs are needed, most crews wouldn't be able to maintain the mandated physical distancing protocols while fixing the problem. This puts workers at risk to repair these critical services."

"We often see an increase in ground disturbance in the spring as homeowners are starting to work outside, which is why April has been National Dig Safe Month for many years," says Dave Baspaly, Executive Director, BC Common Ground Alliance. "If a homeowner does not submit a request, ground disturbance can cause serious damage, and sadly, even injury. With what is going on in the world, we need to do everything we can to continue to provide a safe environment for our families and our neighbours."

"Fixing that fence can wait three days when you consider the cost may be a loss of access to your warmth, your social connectivity, or your ability to wash your hands. The impacts of losing our essential services right now could be catastrophic," says Hyland.

Homeowners can request a free locate online 24/7 at [bc1c.ca](http://bc1c.ca) or via phone during regular business hours at 1-800-474-6886. An online request through [bc1c.ca](http://bc1c.ca) allows homeowners to input their information more quickly and communicate excavation project details with greater accuracy.

### Key Facts:

- Damages as a result of failure to request locates from one call services are unfortunately common among residential properties. In 2018, 5% of all accidental damages<sup>1</sup> (approx 17,000) in the US and Canada came from residential properties.
- **'Locates'** are:
  - As-built drawings provided by utility owners, or in some cases, ground markers for utility lines labelled on excavation sites that are colour-coded and correspond to the utilities they contain.
  - In layman's terms, a 'locate' is a revised set of blueprint drawings submitted by a contractor upon completion of a construction project. These drawings show the dimensions, geometry and location of all components of the project, including utilities.
  - **100% free of charge.**
- Underground infrastructure includes: pipes and cables used to transport oil and gas, water and sewage, electricity, and telecommunication services across BC; all of which are integral to daily living.
- A locate request to BC 1 Call must be completed a **minimum of three business days** before the work begins, to allow utilities enough time to provide the necessary information to homeowners and contractors.
- Homeowners are not clear to dig until all utilities with buried infrastructure have provided details on the area where ground disturbance will occur.

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### For more information, or media requests contact:

Jess Verheyden  
jess@munrothompson.com  
(604) 765-9649

### About BC 1 Call

BC 1 Call is the link between the excavating community and the owners of underground infrastructure. By contacting BC 1 Call, private landowners and commercial excavators reduce the risk of personal injury and property damage. BC 1 Call has over 350 members across British Columbia including municipalities, communication service providers, gas and pipeline companies and irrigation and improvement districts. BC 1 Call is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and has support from the BC Oil and Gas Commission, the National Energy Board, Technical Safety BC and WorkSafe BC.

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<sup>1</sup> 2019. [The DIRT Annual Report for 2018](#). Common Ground Alliance. Pg. 6.

## **About BC Common Ground Alliance**

The BC Common Ground Alliance (BCCGA) is a non-profit organization established to lead the development of consistent practices and coordination of activities to ensure the highest possible standards of worker safety, public safety and damage prevention in connection with underground infrastructure.

The BCCGA is a unique consensus-driven organization with a direct conduit to regulatory innovation. It is open to any individual or organization with an interest in safety and underground infrastructure. The BCCGA works to offer practical tools and to foster an environment in which anyone resident or doing business in British Columbia is aware of and compliant with best practices in regard to underground infrastructure or disturbance in order to ensure the safest possible environment for the citizens and workers of the province.