

6 Ways to Have a Better Dig Season

The 2026 excavation season is shaping up to be more challenging than in recent years. Changes to the one-call law, increased ticket volume, locator shortages, and issues with telecom are creating new risks for contractors. This guide outlines practical steps your team can take to protect your crew, your projects, and your business while working within the JULIE 811 system.

1 | Establish one point of contact in your office to:

- ✓ Manage all requests via the Remote Ticket Entry system.
- ✓ Attach digital image of property with project areas clearly marked.
- ✓ Understand the Most Common Response Codes.



Code 10 - No Conflict

Code 20 - Marked

Your team can proceed if all responses are a 10 or 20, markings are clearly visible onsite and match your scope of work.



Code 30 - Unable to Mark - Check the RTE system for comments and handle accordingly.

Code 50 - Alternate agreement

Utilities may request an extension via email or phone call. **You are not required to accept.** If you do nothing, it's automatically extended. You must respond to the email to accept or deny, or call JULIE before the dig start time.

- ✓ Be the solo point of contact for any extension phone calls.

Pro Tip:

Use Google Earth to map the job site and satisfy white-lining requirements. It's easier than paint and markings.

Pro Tip:

Create rules in your inbox so that Code 50 emails come in as high priority.

2 | Recording No Shows and Violations

No-shows and violations swing both ways. Locators are bound by law to be responsive to excavators. There is liability, monetary penalties, and danger associated with letting a no-show or violation slide.



Record all issues with no shows and violations.

[CLICK HERE](#) to Report a No Show (the locator did not show up to mark).

[CLICK HERE](#) to Report a Violation (the locator marked incorrectly, or issued a false "all clear").

These reports can be made by telephone, but we encourage your team to file online to ensure that the information you provide is correct and not subject to errors in transcription. This protects your team.

3 | What To Do If Job Is Not Marked By Deadline

STEP 1: Call JULIE to confirm the utilities that did not mark.

STEP 2: Wait up to two hours (or until all responses are received, whichever comes first).
If no response, call JULIE again to report a 2nd no show.

STEP 3: Communicate with the crew lead that they can proceed with excavation, but use hand or vacuum excavation where utilities are likely present.

STEP 4: File an incident report of a violation with the ICC. Refer to step 2.



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4 | How to Handle Issues With Telecom

We are receiving consistent reports across Illinois that some telecom providers are issuing automatic “all clear” responses without a locator ever visiting the site. This appears to be related to a system issue and creates a serious risk. If you receive a “clear response” but do not see markings on site:



- ✓ **Do not** assume the area is safe to excavate
- ✓ Treat the ticket as incomplete
- ✓ Document site conditions
- ✓ **Call JULIE** to report the presence of unmarked communication lines
- ✓ **Report the issue** using the contacts below:

Team Rockford - Arrillies Biggs - arrillies.biggs@otsutilities.com

Team Chicago - Margarito Noriega - margarita.noriega@otsutilities.com

Team Naperville - Gabriel Aguirre - gabriel.aguirre@otsutilities.com

Team Joliet - Edwin Corona - edwin.corona@otsutilities.com

Team Peoria - Bruce Wilson - bruce.wilson@otsutilities.com



Please include Aaron Powers aaron_powers@cable.comcast.com and John Denos john_denos@comcast.com on all Comcast complaint emails.

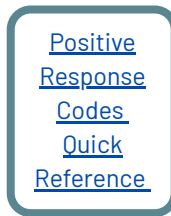
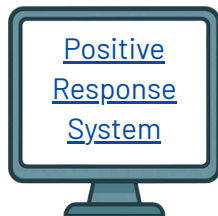
[CLICK HERE](#) for a sample email template to contact telecom providers.

5 | On the Job Site - Guidance for Crew Leaders



- ✓ Have the positive response system on your phone to “Check Ticket Response” live.
- ✓ Check the site to ensure markings match information reported in the Remote Ticket Entry system.
- ✓ Walk the entire site and take photos of marks in case of any issues during the job.
- ✓ Walk the markings of the job site and take photos of any immovable objects and documenting service laterals. This will ensure that you have the proper documentation if there is damage.
- ✓ Each crew should have a Rhino Hit Kit in the truck in case of damage. Use the Hit Kit to document damage vs the marked drop.
- ✓ Keep these photos on file with the job.

6 | Helpful Resources



This guide is intended to support best practices in the field. Contractors are responsible for complying with all applicable laws and safety requirements. Landscape Illinois is committed to improving the locate process on behalf of landscape professionals. We will continue to monitor trends and work with JULIE, the Illinois Commerce Commission, and other stakeholders as appropriate.