



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

**Oregon Utility Notification Center**  
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**April 14, 2022**

**The Honorable Kate Brown**  
Governor  
254 State Capitol  
Salem, OR, 97301

**Senator Peter Courtney**  
Senate President  
S-201 State Capitol  
Salem, OR, 97301

**Representative Dan Rayfield**  
Speaker of the House  
H-269 State Capitol  
Salem, OR, 97301

On behalf of the Oregon Utility Notification Center, I am submitting this report pursuant to ORS 757.562 (1). Oregon's utility damage prevention laws require that an update be presented to the Governor and Legislative Assembly annually.

## **ABOUT THE OREGON UTILITY NOTIFICATION CENTER**

The Oregon Utility Notification Center (OUNC), commonly known as Oregon 811, administers Oregon's excavation laws and statewide locate requests. Created by the 1995 Oregon Legislature, its mission is to operate and maintain a state-of-the-art one-call system for the state to reduce damages to underground facilities and to promote public safety related to excavation issues. OUNC conducts training and outreach and adopts rules to regulate notification and locating of underground utilities.

Through its efforts, OUNC is committed to helping people avoid serious damage, injuries and expenses by preventing accidents before they happen. The service is available by calling 811 or going to [Oregon811.com](http://Oregon811.com) or [www.digsafelyoregon.com](http://www.digsafelyoregon.com). Homeowners and businesses can have their underground utilities marked before digging at no cost. The call center is located in Portland and is staffed by about 50 operators under contract with [One Call Concepts](#).

The OUNC is a public benefit nonprofit corporation with the powers of an Oregon state agency, per [ORS 757.547](#). OUNC has a 21-member Board of Directors, appointed by the Governor, and a staff of two. Board members are unpaid volunteers, and the OUNC hired its first Executive Director in May 2021. No state funds are used to support the activities or administration of the OUNC.

## **CALL CENTER SEES INCREASED VOLUMES, TICKETING SYSTEM ENHANCEMENT**

In 2021, the one-call center (OCC) received 355,035 notifications from people who engaged in excavation. This is a 3.53 percent increase from 2020. These initial notifications are critical to protecting life and property when working and excavating around utilities. The OCC is responsible for identifying the work location and alerting the appropriate utility members of the proposed excavations. As a result, the OCC sent out 2,019,027 excavation notices to underground utility members in 2021. This represented a 0.06 percent increase over 2020 notices that were sent out.

The call center isn't just about calls though, as many submit their requests online. Oregon processes online locate requests through an internet ticketing application called ITIC, and it evolved in 2021 with the introduction of ITICnxt. ITICnxt is a more efficient and accurate way to request locates. More than half of those submitting ticket requests have already converted to the new system, and OUNC prioritized education, training and resources to help with the transition.

The OUNC renewed its contract with One Call Concepts in 2021 as well. This contract will be effective through December 31, 2025, unless terminated or extended. The contract includes a provision for an extension to December 31, 2026.

## **IMPROVED AWARENESS AND SAFETY THROUGH TRAINING AND OUTREACH**

You have likely seen or heard OUNC's public-facing messaging, such as "know what's below" and "call before you dig." Publicity efforts are aimed at raising awareness about the free 811 service and encouraging homeowners to call before they dig. Professional excavators and contractors are also targeted to encourage them to participate in our training programs, to utilize the enhanced features of the ITICnxt online ticketing system, and to follow industry best practices.

In 2021, the OUNC pursued both paid and earned media placements, that included traditional and digital platforms. Through advertising and public service announcements, messages were delivered via print, television, radio, streaming platforms, social media and more. Through sponsorships and partnerships with organizations like the National Excavator Initiative and the Common Ground Alliance (CGA), OUNC has extended reach and access to content and reach.

At public events including the Pendleton Round Up, Hillsboro Hops baseball games, Dozer Days, and more, OUNC continues to go where the people are to engage with DIYers and all those completing projects requiring excavation throughout the heart of dig season (May-October).

The OUNC also continues to prioritize training and education year-round to sharpen skills and provide resources for Oregon's damage prevention community. The OUNC hosts in-person excavator and locator training classes as well as a popular online Excavation 101 course. Nearly 400 people took this online class in 2021.

## **A NEW INTERFACE FOR REPORTING VIOLATIONS**

Enforcement of Oregon's utility damage prevention laws is facilitated by the Oregon Public Utility Commission (OPUC). The OPUC investigates cases and complaints, issuing warnings, penalties and/or corrective action plans depending upon the respective circumstances. Some are required to complete training, with an emphasis on following best practices and continual improvement.

In 2021, OPUC introduced a new online complaint form that has been updated on the websites for OUNC and OUCC as well as everywhere else the previous Request for Administrative Action (RAA) process was referenced. The new online submission form has a QR code for easy access.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

Nationally, 26 percent of active diggers remain unaware of the free 811 service. Our work remains vitally important to protect infrastructure from being damaged and keep people from getting hurt (or worse). Let me know if you have questions or need additional information about the Oregon Utility Notification Center. I am glad to meet with you or your staff via call, virtually or in person anytime.

Respectfully submitted,



**Joshua Thomas**  
Executive Director  
Oregon Utility Notification Center