

§ 87-117. Definitions.

The following definitions apply in this Article:

- (1) APWA. – The American Public Works Association or its successors.
- (1a) Board. – The Underground Damage Prevention Review Board.
- (2) Business continuation plan. – A plan that includes actions to be taken in an effort to provide uninterrupted service during catastrophic events.
- (3) Contract locator. – A person hired by an operator to identify and mark facilities.
- (4) Damage. – The substantial weakening of structural or lateral support of a facility; penetration or destruction of protective coating, housing, or other protective device of a facility; or the partial or complete severance of a facility.
- (5) Demolish or demolition. – Any operation by which a structure or mass of material is wrecked, razed, rendered, moved, or removed by any means, including the use of any tools, equipment, or discharge of explosives.
- (6) Design notice. – A communication to the Notification Center in which a request for identifying existing facilities for advance planning purposes is made. A design notice may not be used for excavation purposes.
- (7) Designer. – Any architect, engineer, or other person who prepares or issues a drawing or blueprint for a construction or other project that requires excavation or demolition work.
- (8) Emergency. – An event involving a clear and imminent danger to life, health, or property, the interruption of essential utility services, or the blockage of transportation facilities, including highways, railways, waterways, or airways that require immediate action.
- (9) Excavate or excavation. – An operation for the purpose of the movement or removal of earth, rock, or other materials in or on the ground by use of manual or mechanized equipment or by discharge of explosives, including, but not limited to, auguring, backfilling, boring, digging, ditching, drilling, directional drilling, driving, grading, horizontal directional drilling, well drilling, plowing-in, pounding, pulling-in, ripping, scraping, trenching, and tunneling.
- (10) Excavator. – A person engaged in excavation or demolition.
- (11) Extraordinary circumstances. – Circumstances that make it impossible for the operator to comply with the provisions of this Article, including hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, ice, snow, and acts of God.
- (12) Facility. – Any underground line, underground system, or underground infrastructure used for producing, storing, conveying, transmitting, identifying, locating, or distributing communication, electricity, gas, petroleum, petroleum products, hazardous liquids, water, steam, or sewage. Provided there is no encroachment on any operator's right-of-way, easement, or permitted use, for the purposes of this Article, the following shall not be considered an underground facility: (i) swimming pools and irrigation systems; (ii) petroleum storage systems under Part 2A of Article 21A of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes; (iii) septic tanks under Article 11 of Chapter 130A of the General Statutes; and (iv) liquefied petroleum gas systems under Article 5 of Chapter 119 of the General Statutes, unless the system is subject to Title 49 C.F.R. § 192 or § 195.
- (13) Locator. – An individual who identifies and marks facilities for operators who has been trained and whose training has been documented.

- (14) Mechanized equipment. – Equipment operated by means of mechanical power, including, but not limited to, trenchers, bulldozers, power shovels, augers, backhoes, scrapers, drills, horizontal directional drills, cable and pipe plows, and other equipment used for plowing-in or pulling-in cable or pipe.
- (15) Nonmechanized equipment. – Hand tools and soft dig technologies.
- (16) Notice. – Oral, written, or electronic communication to the Notification Center from any person planning to excavate or demolish in the State that informs an operator of the person's intent to excavate or demolish.
- (17) Notification Center. – A North Carolina member-owned not-for-profit corporation sponsored by operators that will provide a system through which a person can notify operators of proposed excavations and demolitions and submit reports of alleged violations of this Article.
- (18) Operator. – Any person, public utility, communications or cable service provider, municipality, electrical utility, or electric or telephone cooperative that owns or operates a facility in this State.
- (18a) Parcel. – An extended area of land with fixed boundaries.
- (19) Person. – Any individual, owner, corporation, partnership, association, or any other entity organized under the laws of any state, any political subdivision of a state, or any other instrumentality of a state, or any authorized representative thereof.
- (20) Positive response. – An automated information system that allows excavators, locators, operators, and other interested parties to determine the status of a locate request.
- (20a) Soft dig technologies. – An excavation method that uses air or water pressure to break up soil and remove it with vacuum extraction.
- (21) Subaqueous. – A facility that is under a body of water, including rivers, streams, lakes, waterways, swamps, and bogs.
- (22) Tolerance zone. – If the diameter of the facility is known, the horizontal distance of one-half of the known diameter plus 24 inches on either side of the designated center line or, if the diameter of the facility is not marked, 24 inches on either side of the outside edge of the mark indicating a facility or, for subaqueous facilities, a clearance of 15 feet on either side of the indicated facility.
- (23) Working day. – Every day, except Saturday, Sunday, or State legal holidays. (2013-407, s. 2; 2019-189, s. 1; 2025-21, s. 1.)