

# Improving the Locate System

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# Priority concerns

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1. Late locates and impact to projects
2. Suspended tickets and phone wait times to resolve
3. Inaccurate locates
4. Inability to reach individual locator, or no return calls
5. Validity periods
6. Unclear or unwritten policies and procedures for each locate provider
7. Unclear escalation processes for each locate provider

# Late locates

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Late locates continues to be a very significant ongoing problem:

- Information received from our members is that locates are chronically late.
- In fact, it is worse this year than in previous years.
- Locates are commonly 15 days overdue or more. Some are 45 to 60 days overdue.
- This is the most important issue faced by contractors and other project stakeholders.

# Late locates - Impacts

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- They delay project start dates.
- Create un-predictable timelines that make booking project resources and obtaining permits/approvals with defined start and finish dates very difficult.
- Often results in time spent cancelling and re booking and/or demobilization.
- Late locates can force the contractor to change the desired work flow creating inefficiencies.
- Lost and unrecoverable working days.

# Suspended tickets

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- Tickets can be suspended without notice by ON1Call for up to two days.
- Phone wait times with Ontario One Call to clear suspended tickets up to 13 hours with 3-4 hours being common.
- This ties up company personnel which would otherwise be focused on critical projects or other value-added tasks.
- This compounds the issue with late locates.

# Inaccurate locates

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- Once a locate is received and it's discovered that a specific area or utility was missed it's difficult and sometimes impossible to rectify on the existing ticket.
- A return visit is often required by the locator, and sometimes a new ticket request is necessary.

# Inability to reach locator

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- Some utility locators have not been providing contact information for the actual locator assigned to the ticket.
- Messages are sometimes relayed through the call in line and it's unclear whether it made it to the locator in the field.
- Call backs from the call in centers and and/or the individual locators are not consistent.

# Validity periods

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- The new legislation requires that locates be valid for 60 days, however, locates may expire on different dates depending on when they were completed.
- Staggered utility locate expiry dates within a ticket create complications with the validity period and calling in relocates.



# Unclear policies & procedures

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- Unclear or unwritten policies and procedures, such as managing suspended tickets and escalation procedures impact on contractors ability to manage their projects.
- Clearly defined procedures are required for each utility locator.

# Suggestions & next steps

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- Register late locates so that we have a better understanding of the extent of the problem.
- Track locate delivery so that we are in a better position to submit delay claims.
- Ensure those calling in locates are properly trained and instructed.
- Completing the Professional Locate Administrator Course (PLAC) through ON1Call and getting guidance from experienced staff is essential.
- Open discussion with utility locators to confirm if there are best practices that can be followed while calling in locates in order to provide them with tickets that are the easiest and most efficient to execute.

# Closing remarks

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- We appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with our locate system partners.
- We are pleased to see meaningful improvements implemented by *Bill 93, Getting Ontario Connected Act* such as
  - the ability to share locates
  - the ability to claim against infrastructure owners who provide inaccurate locates or do not provide locates within the prescribed timeline
  - A 60 day minimum validity period
- Through meaningful dialogue and cooperation we **can** make a positive impact to our locate challenges in the short term.

# Thank you!

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