

Locator Safety Awareness Week

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Locator Safety Awareness Week (LSAW) is scheduled for June 19-25, 2017 and it will sneak up on you sooner than you think! This week is all about honoring locators and stressing the need for constant vigilance. It is a great opportunity to let locators know how much we appreciate the difficult, challenging, and sometimes dangerous work of protecting our underground utilities.

Locators work outdoors, at private residences and public facilities, exposing themselves to the risks of dog bites, insect stings, climate and weather. The terrain may be uneven and contain tripping hazards as well as poison ivy and other skin irritants. One of the greatest threats to locators is eye damage from low hanging branches, flying debris, dirt and dust. Given the challenges of the job, on which so much depends, LSAW is a great time to acknowledge their efforts. There are many ways this can be done.

One idea is to hold safety contests on your website or Facebook page. Offering a daily prize to everyone who identifies unsafe practices in various daily photos is one way to have people repeatedly return to your page. Another contest idea might be to ask people to come up with ideas for safety slogans. Getting people to invest in building a safety consciousness is a great way to involve people and give them a sense of ownership in your program. Asking people why they work safe and why it is important, and then filming their answers, is another way to get people thinking about safety. These could be uploaded and shared through YouTube, for example. USIC had great success with this idea in previous years.

Another thought might be to hold a locator safety coffee break, providing coffee and treats. This is a great time to hold both formal and informal discussions on safety while, at the same time, communicating your thanks to locators for their hard work. As an alternative, this could be done with a lunch break as well. Also, playing safety games like "safe practices bingo" is a fun way to have every-

one relax and talk safety. Another simple game is a "safety word search puzzle." Be creative and try to involve everyone in the planning. The more people feel invested, the more they can share their excitement with others.

This year, as in the past, suggested daily Twitter posts will be provided by Infrastructure Resources, publisher of *Damage Prevention Professional* magazine. Companies like Subsite and One Call centers like Tennessee 811 have posted or shared these tweets to provide daily reminders of safety and the importance of LSAW. Other organizations that have utilized these tweets include Case Construction and CGA. Social media offers great value in spreading the message and informing locators and the general public of the need for call/click before you dig. Public interaction like this helps to increase positive attitudes about the important job locators perform. What better way to show appreciation for locators than by spreading the message about the critical work they do?

Another way to let locators know they are appreciated is with small gifts. Coffee mugs and t-shirts that combine safety messages with the 811 logo, along with the company logo, can be great assets in getting the word out. Other ways to get the message out include bumper stickers and small stickers that can be placed where they can provide regular reminders of the importance of safety. Even small things like sending safety cards to your locator or hanging safety posters in your break room can have an impact on safety. The most effective strategies are ones that invite people to take responsibility for safe practices and encourages them to campaign for safety both on and off the job.

Let's not forget that this can also be a great time to reach out to the media to get some local cov-



erage. Even a small notice in a newspaper or a 30-second story on a local television or radio station can help educate the community at large about the valuable role that locators play in keeping neighborhoods safe. It's also a perfect opportunity to enhance your image within the community. A spot about the importance of Locator Safety Awareness Week and why it is important for the public to understand the job that locators do could easily be picked up by a local media outlet. This can be done with a simple press release that includes an offer of an interview with whoever is heading up the drive or, possibly, a locator who can explain more about the important service they provide.

These are just a few of the possibilities. When you add your creative ideas to the mix and take advantage of all the resources provided by Infrastructure Resources, planning your involvement in Locator Safety Awareness Week could not be easier. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to let locators know that their hard work is appreciated. Safety is important year around, day-in and day-out, but LSAW is a time to build general safety awareness that can empower locators to take responsibility for their own safety as well as the safety of others. Let's all make this the most successful LSAW ever! 

Visit dp-pro.com/locator_safety_awareness_week.php for FREE social media messages, promotional posters, web buttons and more. Also, share your LSAW ideas and successful events with us by sending them to Michele@emailir.com for publication in an upcoming issue of *Damage Prevention Professional*.