

# LSAW / Top 10 Hazards

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**LSAW** (Locator Safety Awareness Week), established in 2014 by Infrastructure Resources and endorsed by Nulca, was developed to honor and recognize the important work performed by utility locating professionals. In its 5th year, LSAW is taking place April 22-28, 2018, during the final week of National Safe Digging Month. LSAW gives the damage prevention community the perfect opportunity to not only promote awareness of the hazards utility locators frequently face, but also to acknowledge utility locators for the invaluable work they perform in protecting our underground infrastructure and those who rely on it every single day.

To better understand the hazards that utility locators grapple with throughout the course of their day, we conducted a survey this past year which gave those in the field a chance to rank their top 10 hazards (1 = most dangerous, 10 = least dangerous) as well as the opportunity to share various safety tips with their fellow locators.



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Locating is not a career for the faint of heart. From long days in the sun to preventing utility strikes, we're grateful for all you do for this country's infrastructure. Starting today, we're celebrating Locating Safety Awareness Week with locating tips and contests. Make sure to follow along by liking our page! #LSAW



#1	<b>Working in the road</b>	<b>1.83</b>
#2	<b>Slips, trips and falls</b>	<b>4.07</b>
#3	<b>Climate and weather hazards</b>	<b>4.17</b>
#4	<b>Walking, lifting, bending and squatting</b>	<b>4.67</b>
#5	<b>Working in confined spaces</b>	<b>5.93</b>
#6	<b>Insect bites and stings</b>	<b>5.93</b>
#7	<b>Punctures and injury to feet</b>	<b>6.6</b>
#8	<b>Threats to the eyes</b>	<b>6.77</b>
#9	<b>Dog bites</b>	<b>7.37</b>
#10	<b>Poison ivy and other skin threats</b>	<b>7.67</b>

As you can see, the overwhelming majority of utility locators who participated in this survey were most concerned with the inherent danger associated with working in the road, namely distracted drivers. It's easy to see why this is their biggest concern, because according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), there were 3,477 fatalities and 391,000 injuries attributed directly to distracted driving in 2015 alone. When working in or near a thoroughfare locating buried utilities, it might not always be top of mind to be aware of the fact that someone may be texting on their phone, fiddling with the stereo, or performing one of a myriad of other activities that could divert attention from what they need to be focused on. Having this heightened awareness could potentially save lives.



The other nine hazards listed (and countless others not listed) are certainly with merit and should not be disregarded. From heat stroke and dehydration, to encountering various critters like wasps, rats, or even a 9'3" Red-tailed Boa Constrictor (nope, I wouldn't want to come across one either), one must constantly be vigilant when performing the job of damage prevention. Utility locators are

seeking to protect our vital underground infrastructure and those who are digging within its vicinity, whether with a shovel or a backhoe or any other implement in-between. In the end, they are also doing their best to ensure their own safety so that they can gather around the dinner table with their family after a long day's work. Here is a collection of insightful tips and suggestions that

several experienced utility locators shared with us to help keep everyone safe:

- Always wear proper reflective vests and safety gear. Also, stay hydrated throughout the day.
- Use your PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and always watch where you're walking.
- When working in the road (any road) make sure to have your reflective