

THOMAS J. MILLER  
ATTORNEY GENERAL



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
Environmental Law Division

1305 E. WALNUT ST.  
DES MOINES, IA 50319  
Main: 515-281-5164 • Direct: 515-281-5341  
Email: [jacob.larson@ag.iowa.gov](mailto:jacob.larson@ag.iowa.gov)  
[www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov)

November 7, 2019

William Harleen  
HARLEEN TRENCHING  
2066 X Avenue  
Madrid, Iowa 50156

RE: One Call Violations – Story County

Dear Mr. Harleen:

It has come to our attention that on or about December 11, 2018, Harleen Trenching allegedly conducted excavations with a backhoe at 1950 Meadow Glen Road, Ames, Iowa, to run a septic line to an outbuilding, without providing 48-hours notice of the planned excavation to the owners and operators of underground facilities. As a result, underground facilities, including a 1-inch diameter natural gas pipeline under 20 pounds per square inch of pressure (psi), were not located and marked prior to the excavations. During the December 11, 2018 excavation, you hit and damaged the 1-inch diameter pipeline, resulting in remediation costs to the pipeline company. In addition, you failed to notify the pipeline company of the damage until the following day and attempted to repair the damage yourself. As I am sure you are well aware, striking and damaging underground facilities can have tragic results. You are fortunate that this incident did not result in injury, or worse, to any of your employees, pipeline employees, or first responders.

Although you indicated you believed the remodeling contractor notified you locates had been completed and you observed a yellow “OK” sign painted on the ground near the gas meter, locate requests by another excavator would not have been valid for Harleen Trenching’s excavation; the company/person conducting the actual excavation must place the locate request.

Failure to provide 48-hours notice of the excavation constitutes violation of Iowa Code sections 480.1A, 480.4(1)(a), and 480.4(1)(b)(1)-(8). Failure to timely notify the owner or operator of a damaged underground facility as a result of an excavation constitutes a violation of Iowa Code section 480.5. Iowa Code section 480.6(1)(a) authorizes the Attorney General to seek civil penalties up to a maximum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) per day of each such violation involving natural gas pipelines. Iowa Code section 480.6(1)(b) authorizes the Attorney General to seek civil penalties up to a maximum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000) per day of

each such violation to all other underground facilities. Injunctive relief is also authorized pursuant to Iowa Code section 480.7.

Notice of a planned excavation must be given by either filing a ticket online at [www.iowaonecall.com](http://www.iowaonecall.com) or calling the One Call Notification Center at 1-800-292-8989 or 811 at least 48 hours prior to the excavation.

The purpose of this letter is to advise that the Iowa One Call statute must be strictly complied with. Failure to comply may result in judicial enforcement proceedings initiated by our office pursuant to Iowa Code sections 480.6 and 480.7.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



JACOB J. LARSON  
Assistant Attorney General  
Office of Iowa Attorney General  
Environmental Law Division  
Phone: (515) 281-5341  
E-mail: [jacob.larson@ag.iowa.gov](mailto:jacob.larson@ag.iowa.gov)