



**If you make contact with a pipeline, stop work and notify the owner immediately. Hidden damage could cause a future pipeline failure.**

The information in this brochure is intended for use as a guide only. Consult the *Pipeline Act* (sections 32, 35, and 42) and the *Pipeline Rules* (Part 5, “Ground Disturbance”) for the exact wording of these requirements.

Noncompliance with the rules and requirements applicable to ground disturbance could result in injury or environmental damage. Penalties can include fines or prosecution, and civil claims for damages.

For more information, about the AER, contact:

#### Information Services

Alberta Energy Regulator  
Suite 1000, 250 – 5 Street SW  
Calgary, Alberta T2P 0R4

#### Inquiries

1-855-297-8311

#### 24-hour emergency

1-800-222-6514

[inquiries@aer.ca](mailto:inquiries@aer.ca)

[www.aer.ca](http://www.aer.ca)

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If you will be working inside the pipeline right-of-way, or within 5 m of the pipeline where there is no designated pipeline right-of-way, you must do the following:



1. Get written approval from the pipeline owner before you dig. (Industry might refer to such approvals as encroachment, proximity, or crossing agreements.) If the pipeline licensee does not respond, see the Unresponsive Pipeline Licensee procedure at [www.aer.ca](http://www.aer.ca).



2. Call the pipeline owner at least two full working days before you dig, so the pipeline can be located and marked before you dig.



3. Before digging with machinery within 5 m of the pipeline, locate and hand expose the pipeline and request the attendance of the pipeline owner.



4. Ensure that NO machinery is used to dig within 60 cm of the pipeline or any distance underneath the pipeline without the supervision of the pipeline owner or a representative.



5. Call the pipeline owner at least one full working day before you cover any exposed pipeline.

## Remember

### Excavator’s responsibilities:

- search 30 m beyond the dig area
- check records for the existence of pipelines
- erect temporary fencing along the right-of-way, if needed
- construct proper crossings to allow access over the right-of-way, if needed

### Pipeline licensee’s responsibilities:

- provide pipeline information upon request
- provide reasonable assistance to anyone carrying out a ground disturbance
- mark the position of the pipeline before a ground disturbance takes place
- be present, if asked, during hand exposure
- inspect the pipeline for damage prior to backfilling and keep a written record of this inspection
- supervise any mechanical excavation taking place within 60 cm of the pipeline or under the pipeline
- provide all assistance without cost.

Requirements for Landowners and Industry

## Safe Excavation Near Pipelines



If you are planning to create a ground disturbance, read Part 5 of the *Pipeline Rules*.

Ground disturbance includes such activities as excavating, digging, trenching, plowing, drilling, tunnelling, augering, backfilling, blasting, stripping topsoil, levelling, removing peat, quarrying, clearing, grading, or pounding posts.

These actions are all defined as “ground disturbances” in the *Pipeline Act* and the *Pipeline Rules*. Careless construction near pipelines can cause serious accidents—and cost you a lot of money—if you do not follow proper pre- and post-construction procedures.

### Exceptions

Two situations do not qualify as ground disturbances:

1. Land disturbances of less than 30 centimetres (cm) that do not reduce the pipeline earth cover to less than that when first installed
2. Normal cultivation that does not exceed a 45 cm depth

The requirements in this brochure apply to all pipelines in Alberta that are licensed by the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER). These include

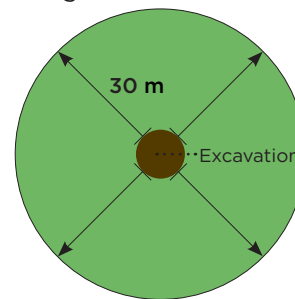
- operating pipelines,
- discontinued pipelines, and
- abandoned pipelines.

Pipelines under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Energy Regulator and the Rural Utilities Branch have their own requirements that must be followed.

**Note that in this brochure, the term “dig” includes any of the activities identified as a ground disturbance.**

If you are planning to carry out a ground disturbance anywhere, you must do the following:

- **Search for pipelines** for a distance 30 metres (m) beyond the entire perimeter of the area in which you plan to dig.



- **Visit [clickbeforeyoudig.com](http://clickbeforeyoudig.com)** or directly contact Utility Safety Partners (formerly Alberta One-Call) to request the location of any buried services.

**Note that not all underground services are registered on the One-Call system; do not assume that they are!**

Other methods to search for pipelines:

- Call the AER to check area records for the existence of pipelines.
- Check the Public Map Viewer in OneStop at [www.aer.ca](http://www.aer.ca).
- Check with local utility providers.
- Check the land title for the easements or rights-of-way.
- Look for pipeline warning signs near the site. Signs are typically found at road or water crossings.

- Look for wells, tanks, valve stations, and meter stations, which might indicate the presence of pipelines.
- Look for ground settling from previous work.
- Talk to nearby residents and landowners.

**Determine where your project will be in relation to the existing pipeline**

### What is a controlled area?

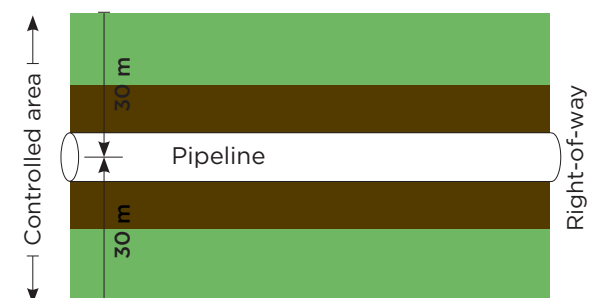
A pipeline’s controlled area is the land bordering it for 30 m along each side, measured from the centre of the pipeline.

### What is a right-of-way?

A pipeline right-of-way is the land allocated for the pipeline and its maintenance as set out in the agreement between the landowner and the pipeline company. The right-of-way is usually less than the 30 m controlled area, but it may sometimes be more.

The width of the right-of-way should be identified on the title or easement.

Do not assume that the pipeline is in the middle of the right-of-way.



If you will be working in the controlled area *outside* the pipeline right-of-way, you must do the following:



1. Call the pipeline owner at least two full working days before you dig, so the pipeline can be located and marked before you dig.



2. Install temporary fencing, if necessary, to restrict heavy equipment from operating over the pipeline.

**Note: All pipeline incidents in Alberta must be reported to the AER, including when a pipeline is hit, even if no product is released.**

