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Pipeline Safety Bureau responds to on-going issues involving underground fiber optic installation projects in Albuquerque

PSB has conducted over 130 related damage investigations across the city since Jan. 1

SANTA FE – While enforcing safe-digging practices statewide, the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission's (NMPRC) Pipeline Safety Bureau (PSB) has been responding to and resolving on-going issues related to underground fiber optic installation projects in Albuquerque.

Since the beginning of the year, the PSB has conducted 132 related damage investigations in Albuquerque alone, issuing 59 Notice of Probable Violation letters to contractors and assessing more than \$20,000 in fines. The PSB has also held five safety stand-down meetings with fiber project owners and contractors to discuss workplace safety, hazards, and prevention strategies.

Additionally, the PSB has been engaging with Albuquerque city officials and fiber project owners to discuss issues, concerns, and expectations.

The PSB enforces the state's safe digging law, which requires everyone to contact NM811 (call 811) before starting an excavation project so that underground facilities can be marked and located beforehand.

In the Albuquerque metro area, the PSB has two dedicated staff investigators who can address formal and informal complaints as timely as possible. If you are experiencing a digging issue, call 888-427-5772 to contact the appropriate damage prevention inspector. A complete list of damage prevention inspectors is available online [here](#).

What the PSB can do:

- Investigate damage reported to NM811.
- Investigate formal and informal complaints.
- Issue Notice of Probable Violations for non-compliant matters with a focus on preventing recurrence.

- Conduct periodic patrols of construction sites to ensure compliance.

What the PSB can't do:

- Review or approve fiber company designs.
- Approve alignment or location of utility installations.
- Permit any construction activities.
- Inspect and approve any repairs to underground infrastructure except for gas pipeline systems.

“Contractors and utility companies are expected to comply with the New Mexico statutes and NMPRC rules that govern fiber installation projects,” said Pipeline Safety Bureau Chief Jason Montoya. “Additionally, contacting NM811 and using their services is crucial before, during, and after any construction project. Taking that initial step before digging is essential in preventing injuries to people and damage to property.”

*The **New Mexico Public Regulation Commission** (NMPRC) serves New Mexico by ensuring safe operations and reliable utility services at fair, just, and reasonable rates consistent with the State's legal, economic, environmental, and social policies. To learn more about the work of the NMPRC, please visit www.prc.nm.gov.*

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