



Gold Shovel Standard®

Prevent. Empower. Protect.

Gold Shovel Standard (GSS) is a nonprofit organization committed to improving workforce and public safety and the integrity of buried infrastructure. GSS believes that greater transparency in all aspects of damage prevention among buried-asset operators, locators and excavators is essential to drive continuous improvement, and vital to increasingly safe working conditions and communities.

Goals of the Organization

- 50% reduction over 2015 levels in the frequency of damages in North America on professional excavation sites by the end of 2025
- More than half of North American municipalities rely on GSS metrics when hiring, establishing or renewing franchise rights and offering permits by the end of 2025
- More than 100 Gold Shovel Standard Communities have been established throughout North America by the end of 2025
- More than 75% of insurance companies consider GSS supported metrics on policies for excavators or locators by the end of 2025

GSS Focus Points

- **GSS Communities** – Geographic areas or regions where innovative partnerships prevent potentially life-threatening damages and reduce risk of damages to buried assets.
- **Metrics: Transparency through standardized performance measurements** – Damage prevention measurements enhance and improve the safety of our workforce and the public alike.
- **GSS Technology** – GSS delivers world-class software to drive continuous improvement that reduce damages and increase public and workforce safety.
- **Damage Prevention-Safety Management Systems** – To increase public and workforce safety, Damage Prevention-Safety Management Systems (DP-SMS) must be broadly adopted by all stakeholders.
- **Low barrier to entry** – GSS is committed to perfecting a program that provides an easy entry-point, and that drives the highest safety yields with the least ongoing impact on daily operations
- **World-class member services** – GSS member services guide you through the Certification process to streamline your pathway to success
- **World-class consulting** – The GSS community of damage prevention experts provide world-class damage prevention consulting to subscribers at no additional cost
- **Boldly Raising the Bar** – GSS tackles the most difficult challenges in the damage prevention industry with a steadfast goal to improve performance and raise the performance bar for all stakeholders



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Understanding the Gold Shovel Standard Platform

- The complex one-call process relies on all participants – one-call centers, owner / operators, locators and excavators – to perform effectively. There is wide variability within peer groups in their effective performance of this complex process, but little transparency about that variability.
- Transparency has been used effectively in industries as disparate as law enforcement, automobiles and healthcare, to deliver marked improvements and transparency can work in damage prevention.
- The damage prevention industry does not currently have established standardized measurement schemes. Standardized metrics for damage prevention are essential to creating a level playing field and driving a reduction in damages to buried infrastructure.
- The absence of standardized metrics to measure the performance of individual stakeholders in damage prevention is a challenge to our ability to continuously improve.
- GSS believes that non-punitive reporting and judgement-free presentation of factual data is the best way to establish standardized metrics.
- Fairly measuring damage prevention performance is difficult, given the complexity of the damage prevention process but standardized measurements must be established and implemented, regardless of how difficult a task it may be.
- GSS is driving the creation and broad deployment of damage prevention metrics (for owner/operators, locators, and excavators) as a key ingredient to a dramatic increase in public safety.
- Continuous improvement to increase safety and the protection of buried assets is the shared responsibility of owner / operators, locators and excavators.
- Reducing damages will require a paradigm shift from viewing the problem of line strikes as belonging to the owner of a damaged line, to a shared problem belonging to all who live, work and frequent anywhere lines are buried.
- Gold Shovel Standard Communities are an innovative way for asset owners to partner and share the responsibility for improving beyond the status quo.
- Obtaining a dramatic reduction in damages will require new and innovative technology and use of safety management systems specific to damage prevention.
- GSS is working to deliver technology to support the program goals and will continue to make those tools broadly available for adoption.
- GSS believes that all stakeholders participating in the complex one-call process, must rely upon a robust safety management system, which specifically incorporates damage prevention to increase public and workforce safety.



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Gold Shovel Standard Advocates for Standardized Metrics

Gold Shovel Standard believes “that which gets measured, can be managed,” and that things unmeasured will continue to go unmanaged.

Just as greater transparency has improved industries as disparate as law enforcement, automobiles and healthcare, Gold Shovel Standard believes it will deliver increasing benefits to our communities, as well.

Dramatic reductions in the frequency of line strikes will remain elusive unless all parties continuously improve and measurements underpin continuous improvement. Standardizing how measurements are done is an overdue first step to drive performance improvement and increase public and workforce safety. To achieve this ambitious plan, Gold Shovel Standard is working with balanced teams of damage prevention experts to draft, refine and broadly deploy damage prevention metrics for all stakeholders.

Human health and safety measurements have been established and broadly adopted over the last two decades, resulting in undeniable improvements in the safety of workers and the public alike. GSS raises the bar by establishing and working towards broad adoption of similar measurements for damage prevention that will result in a significant reduction in the frequency of line strikes.

Gold Shovel Standard Communities

Gold Shovel Standard Communities are a geographic area or region where partnerships happen that reduce risk of damages to buried assets found there, preventing life-threatening damages.

Networks traversing Gold Shovel Standard Communities are expected to be at reduced risk from line strikes.

For too long, it was acceptable practice to the problem of line strikes to be the sole responsibility of the owner of the damaged infrastructure, leaving damage resolution to the utilities involved.

Gold Shovel Standard Communities flip that paradigm, and embrace the recognition that partnerships between asset owners hold the key to driving damage reductions.

In Gold Shovel Standard Communities, excavation work is reserved for those demonstrating excellence in caution around buried infrastructure. In a Gold Shovel Standard Community, permits and right-of-way grants for projects with excavation are typically reserved for those demonstrating caution.

The health of a community can be measured by the safety and reliability of its infrastructure, including key buried assets. People deserve to live and work in communities that provide safe and reliable services, and the integrity of buried infrastructure is a key component of delivering that promise. A Gold Shovel Standard Community is a geographic area dedicated to reducing risk of damages to buried assets, and preventing life-threatening damages through innovative partnerships.



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Gold Shovel Standard Certification When Applied to Excavators

GSS Certification is a proactive indication of an increased investment in damage-prevention to drive safety, reduce damages, and minimize the risks associated with excavating around buried assets. To obtain Gold Shovel Standard Certification, an excavator must have a complete Damage Prevention Safety Management System (DP-SMS) which specifically includes the following essential elements:

1. Leadership and management commitment
2. Annual basic awareness training for all workers on jobs with excavation
3. Whistleblower and stop work responsibility for workers
4. Policy to adhere to all applicable CGA Best Practices*, specifically Ch. 5
5. Policy to hire Gold Shovel Standard subcontractors with few exceptions
6. Thorough investigation procedure to be used in the event of an incident
7. Corrective action procedure with root cause analysis

GSS Certified excavators agree to provide basic awareness training specifically on damage prevention, to all workers who are present on a job with excavation responsibilities, including any new hires, and to preserve records of the most recent training. The training is intended as a narrow excavation training or a narrow supplement as part of other safety training participants may offer. Participants often choose to also provide a more in-depth level of excavation training to workers with supervisory roles.

To maintain Certification, participants agree to

1. Investigate and report all damages to any buried infrastructure (gas, electric, water, sewer, telecom, etc.) directly following any incident
2. If hiring any subcontractors for excavation work, ensure that those subcontractors are Gold Shovel Standard Certified, with few exceptions
3. Report certain work volume information used for normalizing metrics data

GSS Certification provides a benefit to participating organizations, as the Certification demonstrates a recognition of continued learning, quality safety procedures, adherence to Federal and State laws, and investment in Best Practices. GSS Certification enhances reputation by illustrating a commitment to damage prevention, and ensures confidence and peace of mind among buried asset owners and program participants.

** The Best Practices are a publication of the Common Ground Alliance, a District of Columbia, non-profit corporation. The Common Ground Alliance and the Gold Shovel Association are independent organizations and are not affiliated. References by the Gold Shovel Association to the Common Ground Alliance Best Practices do not express or imply an endorsement by either organization of the other or its programs. While the Gold Shovel Association's Certification requirements for excavators currently require compliance with the Common Ground Alliance Best Practices, the Common Ground Alliance, itself, does not maintain such a requirement.*



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Gold Shovel Standard works to *Prevent* life-threatening damages, *Empower* field teams to operate safely, and *Protect* excavation crews and the public.

Get more information by visiting
www.GoldShovelStandard.org

