

4 Tips for Winter Ground Disturbance Work

Winter is on it's way, and with it comes a particular set of ground disturbance challenges. Check out these four tips to avoid the pitfalls of seasonal ground disturbance.

1 Identify and control environmental hazards



Extreme temperatures are a normal part of a Canadian winter, and so is a day's work – even if it's outdoors. Keep your workforce safe by:

- Setting exposure limits
- Identifying set rest periods
- Implementing safe work practices for your environment, climate, and season
- Providing weather-appropriate clothing and ensuring that it's worn

2 Use the appropriate buried facility markers



2

During the winter, chalk or single lines of paint may be covered by snow or obscured by ice. Ensure you use sturdy marking material, such as:

- Stake chasers
- Stakes or lath with paint
- Stakes or lath with flagging

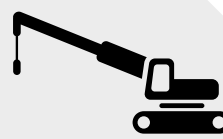
3 Always thaw frozen ground



Excavating frozen earth is not only strenuous and time consuming – it's dangerous, too. Always fully thaw the ground before beginning your ground disturbance. You can't partially thaw, excavate, and then reapply the thawing equipment at a lower excavation. To thaw frozen ground, use equipment like:

- Ground thawing blankets
- Frost hogs
- Hydronic boilers
- Glycol heaters

4 Take special consideration during backfilling



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Backfilling is the final step of a ground disturbance, and can present unique challenges, especially in winter, when surrounding soil hardens and becomes more dense. Make plans for seasonal and weather changes, by:

- Supporting the buried facility with appropriate material
- Bringing in material from elsewhere if the earth is frozen
- Layering the backfill material
- Dealing with compaction