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SEWER LATERALS AND GAS LINES MAKE TIME BOMBS

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ABSTRACT: Time bombs are created when gas mains are inadvertently directionally-drilled through existing sewer laterals. These time bombs are triggered when unsuspecting plumbers clean blockages caused by the gas main. The resulting lawsuits seek large sums to cover damages, injuries and deaths. On the defense are the directional driller and the gas company that hired the driller. These folks say they followed the law and if someone had marked the sewers, they could have avoided hitting them. States are beginning to pass laws over the objections of municipalities who say they don't own the laterals and often have little or no knowledge of their location.

The presenter will give a summary of state legislation on locating of sewer laterals, briefly discuss the positions of excavators and facility operators promoting such legislation and municipalities who strongly oppose it, a summary of how lateral-locating legislation is working in the states that have it, including problems they have encountered and how they are addressing those problems.

The presenter has assisted organizations in several states draft and pass legislation or rules requiring municipalities to locate and mark sewer laterals, giving the primary testimony in favor of such legislation in two states.