



MYTH-BUSTING: PIPELINE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Pipelines are the safest and most efficient way to transport the fuels Canadians use every day. It is crucial that pipeline companies work closely with the people who live and work near their infrastructure to help everyone understand the requirements in place to help ensure the safety of the community, of the environment, and of the pipeline.

Safety is a priority at Trans-Northern Pipelines Inc. (TNPI), so for this edition of TNPI Info, we are busting myths for those of you who live and work near our pipeline system to help make sure the gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel we transport remains safely within our pipeline.

1 MYTH

I have received municipal permits, so I'm good to proceed with my project.

REALITY

All activity that will cause a ground disturbance or movement of heavy equipment or vehicles over buried infrastructure requires its own permits and agreements. ALWAYS contact Ontario OneCall or Info-Excavation (Quebec) for locates as part of your planning process for activities requiring ground disturbance or vehicle and heavy equipment crossings.

3 MYTH

My locate document says I need an inspector on site, but I have the day off and want to get started early on this project. I'm okay to start digging, and I'll save the deeper digging for when the pipeline inspector is scheduled to be here.

REALITY

All conditions on the locate document MUST be followed at all times. If there are changes to your work schedule, please contact us to reschedule the inspector. Failure to comply with the work permit/crossing agreement can lead to a notice of unauthorized activity, or worse – serious injury to the person performing the work, negative impact on the community, and/or harm to the environment.

5 MYTH

Pipeline companies are just being controlling and using these scare tactics to prevent residents and businesses from using and developing our land.

REALITY

One of the reasons pipelines are the safest way to transport energy is because they are buried underground. To keep them safe, rules have been established requiring buried infrastructure be located and written consent is provided for ground disturbance and vehicle/equipment movement activities within 30 metres of either side of the pipeline. Failure to do so can result in serious injury to people, to communities, and to the environment.

2 MYTH

I see where the pipeline markers are, and my project isn't in line with them, so I don't need a locate and can get started.

REALITY

Pipeline markers are in the pipeline right-of-way (ROW) but they do not reflect the pipeline's exact location. Locates are always required prior to beginning projects that require ground disturbance or the movement of heavy equipment or vehicles over the pipeline or right-of-way.

4 MYTH

I've hired someone to perform the work on my property, and I'm sure they have everything in hand; I don't need to ask about locates and permits.

REALITY

While most contractors follow safe-digging and safe-work practices, including the need for locates and written consent to perform work in and around pipelines, not all are as diligent. ALWAYS ask to see the locates and associated permits, and ensure conditions are being met at all times. If possible, ensure you are on site during the locate to hear first-hand the safety information provided by the locators, and share that information with those who are performing the work, as well as your family members or colleagues, and neighbours.

6 MYTH

Municipalities don't have to follow the same processes for locates, permits, and agreements because they have files showing the exact location of the pipelines within their town or city.

REALITY

Pipeline operators and municipalities work closely together to ensure all ground disturbance and development activities are performed safely, and with all of the required agreements and permits in place. TNPI performs locates and sends inspectors for municipal or county work, as it does for individual residents or businesses.

7 MYTH

They always bury pipelines and other infrastructure really deep – I'm sure they're just being overly cautious, and it's not that big a deal.

REALITY

The amount of ground cover over the pipeline can be shallower in some places than others due to erosion, terrain, human activity, and other factors. ALWAYS contact Ontario OneCall or Info-Excavation (Quebec) for locates as part of your planning process for activities requiring ground disturbance or vehicle and heavy equipment crossings.

9 MYTH

I understand that I need permission to build a fence because the pipeline is located near my backyard, but the shed I plan to add to my yard will be on cement blocks, so I don't need any kind of permission to build it.

REALITY

TNPI wants to help residents and businesses continue to use the land where our right-of-way (ROW) is located. However, the installation or construction of any facility over the ROW requires written permission from TNPI – including the installation of sheds and playsets.

11 MYTH

The pipeline is on the other side of the fence from my property – I can complete projects on my side of the fence without a permit or locate.

REALITY

Certain work within 30 metres on either side of the pipeline's centre line – an area known as the "controlled area" – requires written permission from the pipeline operator. And there may be other underground utilities that are within your fenced property. Always contact Ontario OneCall/ InfoExcavation to obtain your free locates before beginning any work that requires ground disturbance to ensure you understand the location of all underground utilities, and what permits may be required to proceed.

13 MYTH

My locates are complete so I can proceed with my project.

REALITY

Your locate document from TNPI will provide you with direction on how to proceed. In some cases, the planned work identified to the locator can safely proceed without any further action. However, if the TNPI locator has indicated that an inspector is required while the work is being performed, or a work permit/crossing agreement is needed, then those conditions need to be met in order to ensure your safety, the safety of the person or people conducting the work, and the safety of your community and environment.

8 MYTH

All of the locates were completed, but I didn't get my project started when I thought I would. I can still mostly see the locate marks and flags, so I'll be okay to proceed.

REALITY

You need a new locate when: a) your project goes outside the limits of your first locate; b) the OneCall ticket has expired; and/or c) the locate marks and flags are gone.

10 MYTH

I am new to this house, and want to do some landscaping. Why do I need permission to enjoy my backyard?

REALITY

The permit process for work that results in ground disturbance (digging, soil removal) or the movement of heavy equipment over the pipeline or right-of-way is in place to ensure that you can, SAFELY, enjoy your backyard – just as traffic rules ensure you can safely enjoy driving your vehicle, or boating rules are there to keep you safe while you're enjoying being out on the water.

12 MYTH

I need to replace my fence, but will be using the existing holes for all fence posts. I don't need a new locate or permit to proceed.

REALITY

The removal and replacement of fence posts will almost always require actions that will cause a ground disturbance – such as widening an existing hole or breaking up concrete to remove an existing post. For the safety of the person performing the work, and the safety of your neighbours and community, always ensure you get a new locate in advance of even the simplest fence replacement project.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

We all play a role in pipeline safety and damage prevention.

CALL OR CLICK BEFORE YOU DIG OR CROSS



Pipelines are recognized as the safest method of transporting refined petroleum products over long distances. Although pipeline leaks are very rare, it's important to know the signs and what to do if you suspect a leak.

If you suspect a leak due to visible flow or pooling of a petroleum product, an unusual oil stain on land or the appearance of a sheen or bubbles in water, the smell of gasoline or oil, or the appearance of dead or discoloured vegetation on or near the pipeline right-of-way:

- 1 Move to a safe location
- 2 Call 9-1-1
- 3 Then call our Emergency line at **1-800-361-0608** available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

YOUR SAFETY, AND THAT OF THE ENVIRONMENT, ARE TRANS-NORTHERN'S TOP PRIORITY.

DID YOU KNOW...

The Trans-Northern Pipelines web site has resources just for our landowners?

These include an email address (info@tnpi.ca), as well as a landowner survey where you can share your feedback.

Visit for full details



What do you think of TNPI Info?



Submit your feedback and content ideas to: info@tnpi.ca today!