

How to Provide Clear Locate Instructions

1. Parts of the Property

When requesting a locate, describe *exactly where* the digging will happen.

✓ Good examples:

- “Locate the **front yard** from the house to the street.”
 - “Locate the **back and both side yards**.”
 - “Locate the **entire property**, including the rear utility easement.”
 - “Locate the **north side** of the property.”
-

2. Easements

If work is within an easement, specify which one.

✓ Good examples:

- “Locate the **rear easement** only.”
 - “Locate the **west utility easement** behind the shop.”
-

3. Radius Instructions

If digging around a single point, give a distance and a **visible object**.

✓ Good examples:

- “Locate a **30-foot radius** around the marked white paint area in the **southeast corner** of the property.”
 - “Locate a **25-foot radius** around the power pole on the **west fence line**.”
-

4. Bounded Areas

If digging in a rectangular or square area, describe each side using distance and direction.

✓ Good example:

“Starting at the white paint in the front yard, locate **100 ft north**, **60 ft east**, **100 ft south**, and **60 ft west**, and everything inside that area.”

5. Linear Paths

For trenches, fences, utilities, or anything that follows a path, include:

- The **width** of the work area
- The **starting point**
- The **direction** the work moves
- The **distance**
- Any **turns**
- Whether it's on a specific side of a road or within a right-of-way

✓ Good examples:

Straight path:

- “From the **south edge of the property**, locate a **6-ft-wide path** working **north 120 ft** to the shed.”

Along a road:

- “From the intersection of N May Ave & NW 63rd St, locate **west 500 ft** along the **north side of the road**, 10 ft wide, within the road right-of-way.”

Marked path:

- “Locate **50 ft on each side** of the **white paint markings**, starting at N May Ave & NW 63rd St, going **west 500 ft**, then **north 350 ft**.”
-

6. Provide Clear, Specific Instructions

Good locate instructions:

- Use **exact distances**
- Use **fixed landmarks** (building, pole, fence line, driveway, paint marks)
- Avoid vague wording like “near,” “around,” “close to,” “about”

✓ **Good examples:**

- “Locate **20 ft on each side** of the white paint line going **north 150 ft**.”
 - “Locate **back yard only**, from the back of the house to the fence line.”
-

7. Don’t Describe Where You Think Utilities Are

Describe **where you will dig**, not where you believe the utilities run.

⊘ **Not acceptable:**

- “Mark where the gas line runs.”

✓ **Acceptable:**

- “Locate a **10-ft-wide path** from the **meter to the back fence**, working west 80 ft.”
-

8. Legal Descriptions

Legal descriptions (e.g., “NW quarter of section 4”) can be added but cannot be used to replace locate instructions for locates. You must describe **where the digging will take place on the ground**, in real-world directions and distances.

✓ **OK example:**

- “From gate on north side of the field, locate a **200-ft by 300-ft area** starting 100 ft east of the gate.”
-

9. GPS Coordinates

GPS coordinates can be added, **but must be accompanied by:**

- Clear driving directions AND
- Exact distances describing the dig area

Because coordinates alone do not define the size or shape of work.

10. “Crew Will Show Locator”

You may include contact info or note that your crew can meet a locator, **but locate instructions are still required.**

✓ **Acceptable:**

- “Locate **front yard only**. Crew will be on site for additional guidance.”