



Education Spotlight: Cross Bore Safety

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In an effort to educate stakeholders on safe excavation practices, Georgia 811 recently caught up with Robin Rosen, Cross Bore Program Manager and Asset Protection Program Manager at Southern Company Gas.

Q: What is your professional experience with cross bores?

Robin: I am a licensed professional engineer and certified project management professional with more than 30 years of experience in various civil engineering disciplines focused primarily on water, sewer and storm water condition assessment and rehabilitation. After many years as an engineering consultant for water and sewer utilities across the southeastern United States, I joined Southern Company Gas in 2015 as their Legacy Cross Bore Program Manager. In that capacity, I have served in a pivotal role in implementing and documenting cross bore detection and prevention requirements. I am relied upon as the sewer and cross bore subject matter expert for all of Southern Company Gas, operating across 4 states.

Q: What would you consider essential information about cross bores that should be shared with excavators?

Robin: My key message regarding cross bores is that you should assume that you could encounter one on any jobsite. When utilities first started using directional drilling in 1970s and 1980s, best practices were not in place for recognizing what other utilities might share that same underground space. Utility marking practices have come a long way, but sewer laterals are rarely marked as they are considered to be a privately owned line. Excavators should be on the lookout for indications that sewer laterals may be present near gas lines and use locating practices such as CCTV, sondes, fish tapes etc. to identify the sewer lateral locations prior to excavating. Cross bores can go undetected for years until conditions change, roots infiltrate, or there is a backup.

Q: What else is important to know?

Robin: If you suspect that a cross bore may be present, stop work immediately and contact your local gas company. Many tools that plumbers/sewer utilities use to clean sewer mains and laterals can damage gas lines leading to a potentially hazardous leak condition.