

Announcer ([00:02](#)):

You are listening to the Safety Moment Podcast by Utility Safety Partners. Safety is always a good conversation and it's a click away. Here's your host, Mike Sullivan.

Mike Sullivan ([00:15](#)):

Welcome back to the Safety Moment Podcast. Believe it or not, this is season five and here I am behind the mic again and we're ready for a whole bunch of new episodes, new guests, and new topics that I hope you'll be tuning into and downloading as we progress throughout the year. My guest today, so for our first episode of 2025, is my colleague Josef Rosenberg. Josef and I are going to be talking about the damage information reporting tool, which is the timing of that is important right now. We are in the cycle right now where all the damages for the 2024 report have to be submitted to the Common Ground Alliance before the end of March, and we're busy doing that right now and I wanted to talk to Joe about really the dirt report and how it works and dispel some of the rumors and perhaps talk about some of the challenges with the dirt report. So without further ado, Joe Dirt. Welcome back to the Safety Moment Podcast. Joe, how many times is this for you now?

Josef Rosenberg ([01:25](#)):

I think this is my third time.

Mike Sullivan ([01:26](#)):

Third time's a charm, right, so that's what they say. This is good. As I mentioned at the top of the introduction, we're going to be talking about the Canadian Common Ground Alliance's Dirt Report, and for those who aren't familiar, maybe just, well, actually before we even do that, I mean yes, some people have listened to you before, but maybe just tell us who you are and how you got to where you are today in relation to the Damage Information Reporting tool.

Josef Rosenberg ([01:55](#)):

Sure. I'm Josef Rosenberg, I'm the contact center manager for Utility Safety Partners. I've been in this role for about seven years now, give or take. And prior to that I was middle manager with USP working, overseeing the contact center operations from a more direct hands-on perspective. And before that I was an agent working on the front line. So I've seen the company through a lot of different changes relative to the CCGA and dirt. I have sat on the direct with the CCGA for gosh, it's got to be over a decade at this point, forever.

Mike Sullivan ([02:36](#)):

I

Josef Rosenberg ([02:36](#)):

Think it's, yeah, I've been both the chair as well as the vice chair and stepped back from that with the Alberta Common Ground Alliance. I also was chair and vice chair there, or co-chair I think it was at one point, and oversee it pretty much individually for quite some time now. I guess you could still call me the chair on the Alberta Common and Grand Alliance, but effectively that just means I'm handling

Mike Sullivan ([03:06](#)):

All And we talking about the Direct, that's a Damage Reporting Evaluation committee, correct?

Josef Rosenberg (03:10):

That's correct, yeah. Most people just call it the Dirt Committee. We do it the Dirt Tool, but yeah, the Direct or the DREC is the technical title of the committee.

Mike Sullivan (03:19):

So we've been collecting Dirt Data, the Damage Information Reporting Tool data in Alberta for well over 10 years.

Josef Rosenberg (03:27):

Yeah, I believe the first entry we put in was for 2012, so it's been about 12 or 13 years now.

Mike Sullivan (03:35):

Yeah, and you've been around I think for most of that, if not all of it.

Josef Rosenberg (03:41):

Yeah, I don't remember exact.

Mike Sullivan (03:43):

Don't remember you not being involved,

Josef Rosenberg (03:44):

The exact timeline. It's definitely been since somewhere near the beginning. Obviously there were people involved prior to me, my direct predecessor on the Albert Common Ground Alliance was Joel Birdwell and he operated as chair for at least a year or two prior to me coming in.

Mike Sullivan (04:04):

That's right.

Josef Rosenberg (04:05):

So they had been inputting for not very long though when I first stepped in.

Mike Sullivan (04:11):

And you've seen a lot of changes, perhaps more so on the Alberta side than the broader CCGA dirt report, but maybe you can tell us about that. I mean, tell us about dirt in general. What is it?

Josef Rosenberg (04:25):

So dirt is effectively just an online data collection tool that was published by the Common Ground Alliance group in the us which of course the CCGA and the A-B-C-G-A are regionally affiliated with dirt stands for Damage Information Reporting tool, and it's effectively what it says on the tin. It's a website where they can enter or a excavator member locator interested third party can enter information related to utility damage, both underground and overhead as well as near misses. Though there are far fewer those obviously than direct damages. They can be entered just using a standard dropdown fill form with a bunch of prefilled fields and things like that that are relevant to the damage incident itself,

or they can utilize it as a mass upload platform with it has API functionality so they can tie it in together with their internal damage reporting softwares, which some companies have done.

(05:37):

It's used relatively universally throughout North America, even more so in the United States than it is in Canada though most regions in Canada are utilizing it for at least their regional damage reporting. Getting individual companies to use it is a little more difficult without legislation and things like that. But we have been our best with what we can working individually with different regional partner groups to effectively make them feel more comfortable entering that information and getting themselves set up so that they can maximize their time use and entering that every year. It is a voluntary platform,

Mike Sullivan (06:17):

Which that's the thing I wanted to get to next. Yeah, I mean it's not mandatory, I don't think anywhere in Canada. Is it mandatory to report damages into dirt In some US states? I know it is mandatory. There are some mandatory reporting states, but not all of them. And so really we get what we get really in terms of the number of damages reported and the number of submitters we get what we get. And therein lies the challenge or the problem the way I see it because, and we've talked about this before and I've had comments before about this when the report is created and I want to get into the timeline a little bit of that, and one of the reasons why we're having this conversation today is because we are at the deadline basically for dirt, all damages have to be submitted to the CGAI believe the end of March,

Josef Rosenberg (07:11):

March 31st is their typical due date when they do a final compilation of the previous year submissions.

Mike Sullivan (07:16):

So if you are interested, if you're listening to this podcast and you can submit a report damage into Dirt, then really do it if you can and if you not sure how to then send an email to info@utilitysafety.ca and somebody will respond to you accordingly and how you can be a dirt submitter. But going back to the idea of mandatory versus voluntary, I mean we get what we get and Alberta has been somewhat successful and securing is the number of dirt submitters we have. Now at some point, if I'm not mistaken, we were roughly 65, 75 dirt submitters. Is that still the case?

Josef Rosenberg (08:00):

It's fallen off a little bit. You find that there tends to be a bit of transience when people move companies or somebody that's s responsible for it gets promoted or moved elsewhere or quits or what have you, and there's nobody there really there to pick up the ball and run with it. I've noticed that happening. There's people I was talking to again 10 years ago that were submitting pretty virtuously and they have fallen off the map or no longer work for the company that they were working for and whoever took over their position if it was filled just hasn't been stepping up

Mike Sullivan (08:37):

Or sometimes a person leaves and then the duties are disseminated amongst others and this may be one of those functions that doesn't get assigned

Josef Rosenberg (08:44):

Effectively. And relative to the US legislative piece you'd mentioned before too, that's kind of what I was alluding to in the United States, they tend to have I guess what you would call a higher data quality level simply because there's an expectation. But I have talked to my colleagues there as well in states that do have mandatory dirt reporting and they still say that they're missing,

Mike Sullivan (09:08):

They struggle a

Josef Rosenberg (09:08):

Ton of data there's or mandatory does not necessarily mean widespread compliance.

Mike Sullivan (09:15):

And this is where looking at the report that comes out from the CCGA roughly the third or fourth quarter every year, and that provides all the damage information reporting from the previous year. So the report that was just released back in October or whatever it was, November was a 2023 report. So all the report of damage to 2023, the 2024 report, we don't have all the damages yet. They're going in now they're submitted to the Common Ground Alliance by the end of March and then that report of those damages is released later on. So we won't release it in Canada until again, roughly that November timeframe when we are meeting in Halifax with the Canadian Common Ground Alliances. And one of the reasons why it's even further delayed is we have that the CCGA wants to recognize the official Languages Act and we'll translate the report, which is great, I'm glad we do that, but when the report drops and we were able to view it automatically, I think people look at, they compare province to province and you and I have had this conversation before, it looks like Alberta had one call and now Utility Safety Partners has been around for 40 years.

(10:34):

We have just shy of 900 members that register their assets with us.

(10:41):

We process half a million or more locate requests every year, and yet the number of damages we see in the province of Alberta is usually the highest or second highest amongst the provinces and second only, or maybe just above Ontario, which has legislation as well. But to the casual observer, they think, oh my God, this happening in Alberta. They're a bunch of cowboys. But it's when we start to drill down, and this is where I wanted to talk about the number of submitters is that we have a high number of submitters of damage whereas other provinces and Ontario does too, but most provinces don't. And this is where it's a bit of a situational paradox because in my view it means if you have a lot of dirt submitters, there's a lot of engagement, you have a high level of engagement from the damage prevention professionals and stakeholders across the province who see the value in reporting damage and do so what that turns into is a lot of damages because if you have 10 people reporting 10 damages, you have a hundred damages.

(11:50):

If you have two people reporting 10 damages, you have 20. And that's where the snowball effect comes in. And to the casual observer, they think, oh my God, there's a problem in Alberta where in fact it's the opposite in my view. So when you take the number of damages and you divide that by the number of submitters, then I think you have your real number of damages. We've talked about this before and A-C-C-G-A had that table in previous reports and it was dropped from this one. I don't know why and hopefully it'll make its way back, but this is where not all reporting is equal and it's important that we

don't compare one province to the other. I think you have to take the province reporting the damages and compare it to previous years for that province. Would you agree?

Josef Rosenberg ([12:38](#)):

Definitely. And I think at the end of the day it's kind of difficult to read anything. I guess there's no single source of truth truly for any of the data that's collected through dirt other than what it is at face value. If you're looking at things like say, damages per 1000 notifications, looking at a per capita aggregate, Alberta's always been on top. Last year we were at, or 2023, we were at 2.09 damages per a thousand notifications. So sitting at somewhere at I guess that would put us at 0.05% of all locate requests ended up resulting in the damage damage, which seems high, especially when you look at other provinces such as Ontario where they're sitting at a 0.65. Now two things to remember. One thing you mentioned before, Ontario is legislated. So theoretically every excavation in Ontario is going to result in a notification or multiple notifications, but not all ticks are the same.

([13:52](#)):

Some have more notifications, some have less. On average, Alberta actually has more notifications per ticket than Ontario. Secondly, Ontario does not legislate the usage of the dirt tool. That's not part of their legislation. So while they're getting significantly more notifications because they have all of their excavations being logged in, they have more than double our population. They of course could potentially have significantly less contributions to their dirt system since it is once again voluntary and at least somewhat predicated on the ability of their common ground alliance group to get submitters to work frequently and who they've fostered those relationships with to get those people online and convince 'em to be able to utilize it. So there's a lot of factors at play that can affect this number. So it looks like Alberta's a huge outlier to a degree, but then you compare it to say British Columbia, which is at 1.59. Now that's not as high as 2.09, but that's still pretty high. That's or nearly three times higher than what Ontario is looking at. And British Columbia has significantly less incidents. They have about a quarter of the incidents reported into the system. They obviously have significantly less notifications as well because they're not legislated either

Mike Sullivan ([15:09](#)):

And less reports of damage obviously because less submitters and everything else. Yeah,

Josef Rosenberg ([15:12](#)):

Exactly. The dirt tool in my opinion, is much more useful for identifying common trends, particularly around the types of excavation that are causing damages in particular regions. They kind of point to what kind of excavations are most commonly taking place in that region because of course that's not going to be the same. There's different levels of infrastructure work going on in different provinces based on their histories and what their provincial governments have been allocating funds towards or what kind of federal allocations they've been getting. And it also points to which groups are reporting. Now everything in the dirt tool is completely anonymous. We actually don't know who the submitters are when it comes down to individualized notifications or the individualized submissions themselves. We see the data, but we don't see who was working. That said, there are indicators, you can see what type of facility was hit.

([16:15](#)):

Generally they give kind of an overview of what type of work they were doing. So if they were say, directional drilling, well there's a good chance that they're putting in some sort of shallow utility in a lot

of cases. So that narrows it down to three major players. So who's putting in or who's actually submitting to Dirtt will affect those things as well. It's difficult to get, I guess anything that you can say is the defacto, this is the absolute god's truth for this data piece, simply just because the factors can fluctuate so significantly between different regions and how they've kind of built up their user base within Bur

Mike Sullivan ([17:09](#)):

Have you registered for Utility Safety Partners 2025 Utility Safety Conference? We are going to be at the JW Marriott Ice District in Edmonton, April 14 to 15, and our title this year is Breaking the Ice, building a Stronger Community. You can go to our website utility.safety.ca and click on the events tab to bring you to the conference information registration, the event program, and I sure hope to see you there. So you talked about identifying trends and Absolutely that's what we see. Some of the high level communication we've seen about dirt is when you submit a locate request, you're virtually eliminating the risk of damaging anything, which makes sense because you've initiated the damage prevention process and all the way down the line that ball is passed to the next person in the process and you assure safety and the integrity of the breed utility.

([18:11](#)):

But when that doesn't happen, and I know one of our members, they've identified that no locate damages is almost, it's over 40% of all their damages are in no locates, which again lends support to the need for legislation. I mean, we've been around for 40 years. I don't think there's anybody in the province who's been doing any kind of activity that doesn't know to request a locate to click before you dig, and yet the damages still happen. No locate damages knowing what you know of these trends and the cycle is supposed to be, we identify the cause through root cause analysis and then perhaps a best practice is initiated to address that cause. Once that is approved, then the Education Awareness Committee would design a campaign to promote awareness of that new practice to reduce damages. Is that

Josef Rosenberg ([19:19](#)):

Happening? As far as I know, yeah. A lot of the data that's being collected in the system is being utilized at least in some way between different regional groups to kind of facilitate their directed targeting for advertising in each season. I think for One Call services in particular, it's very notable that, well, if I just quickly napkin math, the numbers we're looking at an absolute significant chunk. Close to 70% of all the utility strikes that are reported into Canada's nationwide database are due to some form of no markings. So that if anything can be taken as somewhat of a single source of truth because it's Canada wide, you look at that as an aggregate statistic, you can say the safest thing you can do is get a locate request. And then the second piece to that is ensuring that we have proper training for the locators in the field and for those submitting requests so that they're submitting accurate requests that fully encompass their work areas and trying to marry those two pieces together using the initiatives. For example, what Utility Safety Partners does. We work with excavators out in the field with our ambassador program to help them learn to use our software on our website. We host webinars, we have online training videos, we have one-on-ones. We send people to trade shows to talk with people and show them how to utilize best, utilize the software to fix that accuracy. And then on the other hand, we also have of course our training standards committee, which is pushing Better Locate standards, better locate Practice

Mike Sullivan ([21:08](#)):

Education, GDQ one updating all the time. Yeah,

Josef Rosenberg ([21:11](#)):

Correct. And ensuring that those groups are moving towards a safer goal. Right. And I think if you're looking from an advertising perspective, there's a lot to mine there from public as far as public perception goes because those that are in the public, they're looking for short soundbites and quick little indicators and having something that's like 70% of utility damage are caused by a lack of a locate request in some form or another. Make sure you call before you dig or click before you dig or confer with your local one call center, it's free, but ease quick messaging

Mike Sullivan ([21:58](#)):

With that though, I mean is the dirt tool, is it keeping pace? So one of the things, you've led the charge on this, but one of the things we've identified to reduce damages is to shift calls to clicks. And if you look at the data in the Canadian CGA dirt report, the vast majority, I think we're like 88% now across Canada. Locate requests are online, which is a tidal wave compared to where we were 10 years ago. And you've initiated that into the analysis into that to identify and it was supported by other contact centers that locate requests online as opposed to locate requests by a phone call reduces damages, so it's the best practice we need to shift calls to clicks and that's essentially happened. Does the dirt report, for example, take that into account? Is it documenting that part of the damage prevention process? Identifying, okay, there was a damage, was there a locate request, yes or no? If there was, was it a phone or was it a web? Is it doing that today?

Josef Rosenberg ([23:17](#)):

Not currently. Now the regions themselves do have the option to add, I guess what you would call personal statistics or personal dropdowns to the system. I think they get two or three currently that can be manually added. This information of course, isn't uploaded to the CGA database because it's supposed to be region

Mike Sullivan ([23:41](#)):

Specific, but our own virtual dirt could do that.

Josef Rosenberg ([23:43](#)):

Correct. If we wanted to add it, we could add it, but then the data would be specific to Alberta. It wouldn't be necessarily available to everybody

Mike Sullivan ([23:53](#)):

Else. But couldn't the Canadian CGA dirt committee or Damage Reporting Evaluation committee, they enact that for all provinces?

Josef Rosenberg ([24:03](#)):

I don't see why not. It definitely would be something that somebody could bring up and be part of a vote.

Mike Sullivan ([24:09](#)):

Yeah, I mean I might know a guy, I might be looking at him right now, but it's something that we should, in my view, we should be doing because we've identified this in Alberta, Ontario upheld that analysis and actually their analysis of that information was even more compelling than what we had in Alberta,

and I believe Quebec did as well. They since mandated locate requests for members and contractors to the web as we did in Ontario. Now they're not just doing members and contractors. They are mandating web requests for everybody, which is, I applaud that. I think it's the right way to go. It's a challenging thing to do, but it's the right way to go. But it seems to me that if we've identified that and we should be measuring it and everybody should be measuring it Now, let's pull back a little bit. Can you walk me through the process and we talked about the number of dirt submitters we have Joe Backhoe or Betty Lunchbucket, whoever wants to report the damage into dirt. How do they do that?

Josef Rosenberg ([25:18](#)):

So first steps effectively would be ensuring you have a dirt account. So you go to [cga dirt.com](#), create an account. It's just going to ask for your email address, personal information, which company you work for, et cetera. You'll submit it, confirm your email as you typically do when you sign up for something and then it'll shoot me an email. Since I oversee that database, I'll confer with you to confirm you are who you say you are. Just not a huge robust background check. I'm not looking for ID or anything. I just want to make sure that you actually

Mike Sullivan ([25:48](#)):

Work for, there's nothing nefarious here, obviously,

Josef Rosenberg ([25:50](#)):

I want to make sure you work for the company. You actually say you work for so far to this day and however decade plus I've been doing this, I have not seen a single person that's been misrepresenting themselves and I'll approve it should take less than a day and you'll be able to go in and submit a request. You log into the

Mike Sullivan ([26:10](#)):

Website and it's pretty straightforward, right?

Josef Rosenberg ([26:12](#)):

Yeah, and as I mentioned, especially for new submitters, they can easily log in using their PC or mobile device. It does have a mobile enabled site just to fill out the form or the back or the dropdowns and things like that. Optionally, again, you could have your IT department connect through and create an API if you have an internal damage taking software and it accepts basically standardized CSVs and things like that. It's just a matter of mapping the columns and those can be uploaded once a month, once a quarter, whatever works for your company. That's pretty quick to set up once somebody does the initial build.

Mike Sullivan ([26:52](#)):

How many damages, roughly, I don't know if you know the exact number for this past year for 2024 yet, but say 2023, how many damages were reported number to,

Josef Rosenberg ([27:02](#)):

According to the report we had precisely, I had it up and then I clicked out of it because I'm very smart. It was 3,173 in 2020,

Mike Sullivan ([27:15](#)):

So roughly 3,200 damages reported. Now we receive those Utility safety partners receives those, and we have agents who put those into dirt. For those who are reporting. Is any other triage required from our agents to do that?

Josef Rosenberg ([27:31](#)):

Typically not. Once we receive a damage report, we receive a damage report that's put into the system. The system verifies. It's not a duplicate because sometimes obviously things can be duplicated on the backend could be put in by one of the member companies that actually struck the line or the effective member at a later date typically. And that information is put in just as part and parcel of that damage taking process. We just do it on a staggered basis throughout the year.

Mike Sullivan ([28:03](#)):

So how many agents do we have working on this and is it a full-time thing for them until the reports are done or how do we manage that?

Josef Rosenberg ([28:11](#)):

Typically? No. I have three agents that are currently trained to do it though. Anyone that's effectively good at data entry could accomplish it pretty well as long as they have the base knowledge level to identify what's the difference between a distribution and transmission gas line? They typically tackle it during our down season

Mike Sullivan ([28:33](#)):

Usually, which works out well for Roses by happenstance, right?

Josef Rosenberg ([28:36](#)):

Oh, a hundred percent. The entries typically start sometime around October and they finish up usually before the end of January, maybe early February. If things are a little bit busier or there's more to enter because they do take a little bit of time since there's a lot, it's effectively two systems that aren't connected, so they have to kind of manually pass over that info into the dirt system.

Mike Sullivan ([28:59](#)):

Now, the dirt report, I mean, the whole idea of dirt is voluntary. It's not mandatory in Canada anywhere right now, but it's not there to lay blame, right? I mean the damage information is not being accumulated or reported to identify, okay, Johnny Lunchbucket, you didn't put a locate request in and this happened. That's not what it's for. And the CCGA and all the member provinces, we underline that. We just want your data. We don't want your name. Typically, how do we keep that anonymous? Because obviously you receive the information from somebody who wants to report damages, you know who they are and you have their contact information. How do we keep that data private?

Josef Rosenberg ([29:49](#)):

Well, as I mentioned, we know who they are, but I don't know when they submit, somebody could register an account and not submit for years. I wouldn't be aware of it. That's actually part of the reason that they had a minor purge about a year and a half ago was the Common Ground Alliance said, okay, so any account that hasn't actually logged into the program within X amount of time, I'm unsure what that

interval was. I'm assuming 12 months we'll have their accounts deleted. So we ended up losing about half of our submitters, which effectively pointed to the fact that half of them hadn't been submitting, again, due for the aforementioned reasons, either their company lost interest or they moved on and nobody else picked up that ball and ran with it. And they effectively have a smaller submitter account. That said, sorry, my system's blinging at me. It's very distracting to me though. I lost my train of thought.

Mike Sullivan ([30:49](#)):

No, that's okay. I mean, we were talking about how we're capturing dirt and really how it's kept anonymous. We want to make sure that it's maintained and that's

([31:01](#)):

A real cornerstone of the whole dirt thing, right? The idea, and this is going back quite a way, and I remember the discussions very early on with dirt, is that we don't want a regulator getting a hold of this. This is not what it's meant to do. We are interested in the data. We were interested in improving the cycle of reviewing the data, identifying root cause, addressing it, and initiating best practices that will prevent a recurrence. That's really what it comes down to. And to do that, we don't need a person's name. We just need their engagement of all that data. So that's where we were talking about

Josef Rosenberg ([31:40](#)):

Effectively the anonymity factor has always been a sticky point. A lot of folks see it as an admittance of guilt if they're entering anything in the system, and it's like, well, this is internal company data, right? Well,

Mike Sullivan ([31:53](#)):

It's a report, right? A

Josef Rosenberg ([31:54](#)):

Report,

Mike Sullivan ([31:54](#)):

Yeah,

Josef Rosenberg ([31:54](#)):

We struck our own line. Nobody else needs to know about that. It's like, well, at the end of the day, it's like even if there's no harm, no foul, there's no spill, there's no loss of product or anything like that.

Mike Sullivan ([32:07](#)):

There's an opportunity to improve, obviously.

Josef Rosenberg ([32:09](#)):

Correct. And if they're tracking it internally, then it's obviously something the company deems worthy of tracking. So why not enter that information into dirt? Again, I have no idea who's submitting what. You can kind of glean an idea from it if you're drilling down at the individual submission level and seeing like, okay, this was done in this area for that type of thing, and this is the type of line that was struck and all that sort of stuff. But even then you're doing a lot of, I guess you're inferring things from data without

any definitive proof of it. And I'd say there's enough different telecoms and enough different electrical providers and enough different gas distribution groups that you're not going to be able to say one way or the other that this is without question. This particular company, and again, that's only if you have access to the backend data, the published data, the things you're seeing in the dirt report is completely wiped of that. There's absolutely nothing there to identify an individual company or group and quite simply just lays out the data bare in an aggregate for that region and then the country as a whole.

Mike Sullivan ([33:20](#)):

So let's recap a little bit. I mean, really thanks for doing this. And again, the timing of this episode of the safety moment was to lend a little bit more support to dirt and let people know what Utility Safety Partners is doing, what your team is doing and what you do not only for Alberta, but nationally as well at the time when the reporting deadline is looming and that cycle of how it works and preparing the report and the translation and everything and why it's released when it is. But let's recap a little bit. Bottom line reporting damage is voluntary, but if you're reporting damages, it's anonymous. We don't know who you are. We don't want to know that information is not going to be published. And if you're reporting the damages, you're contributing to the improvement of the damage prevention process. Really, that's what it comes down to. That's a big piece we want to improve all the time. But unless you're regulated perhaps by the Alberta Energy regulator or the Canada Energy regulator, or maybe the BC Oil and Gas Commission, damages are not required to be reported. Now they're reported to those regulators, but I think is it Alberta, the Alberta energy regulator, and perhaps the CER as well, they do provide us with data. Correct.

Josef Rosenberg ([34:44](#)):

The Alberta Energy regulator yearly publishes a document with or rather a spreadsheet going all the way back to 1979 that contains all the damages for that entire year. Now, the issue with it, however, is that the data itself is even more sparse than what we normally take in on a dirt request form. Typically, it only hits a data quality index level of about 40%. Well, our usual average for entries is about 60 to 65%. Not amazing, but much more workable. Better than

Mike Sullivan ([35:21](#)):

40.

Josef Rosenberg ([35:22](#)):

Correct. We also end up seeing a lot of duplicates because we do have a number of pipeline operators that are submitting into dirt. So there's a little bit of a comparative process that goes on there. They don't actually submit into the dirt system, but they do provide that data to be entered should we so wish to use it.

Mike Sullivan ([35:39](#)):

So again, just to recap, reporting is not mandatory. The cycle of the reporting is Yep, end of March. We want to have all that data in to the CGA. The Canadian Common Ground Alliance will produce their report sometime in the beginning of the third quarter, quarterish, roughly mid to third quarter, and then as a Canadian Common Ground Alliance, that report is viewed as where we can create best practices to prevent a recurrence. So that cycle has to happen. Before we go here, where do you think, now you've been doing this for a long time, where do you think we should focus our attention and our resources to improve what we're doing in Canada?

Josef Rosenberg (36:28):

It's tricky because regionally we do meet between all the different regions, at least a couple times a year, and we talk about where we've seen success and where things have been difficult, and we share techniques and processes that we use to try to increase our user base and increase our data quality index and all those various pieces. But what I'd like to see, and I mean this is just a pie in the sky, because we want to see legislation everywhere, right? At the end of the day, we'd like to see provincial legislation related to excavation just to ensure that people are following the system. Something at least similar to what Ontario has though, potentially improved a little bit. And it should also contain some sort of damage reporting process, whether that happens through the one call service, which could easily be managed or by individual excavators.

(37:29):

I feel like that's really the holy grail there is when you actually have that robust level of damage reporting to the point that you can make conclusions based off of each individual data point, instead of saying, well, this is the data point, but here's a whole bunch of caveats related to it, eliminating those caveats and actually just being able to say, yes, Alberta has X damages per thousand notifications. This is a true fact that we can reliably state without hedging it whatsoever. I feel like that's the ultimate goal, but getting there is difficult. If you're relying entirely on voluntary information, we can get as much voluntary information as we like, but we're still only scratching the surface. It's the literal tip of the iceberg when it comes to actual damages. I've seen damages that make the news that don't end up in dirt.

Mike Sullivan (38:24):

Well, I was going to bring that up actually, and I've seen that too. It's all over the news, all over social media and never made it into dirt. So we don't know, and maybe a factor of that is because it's so public that maybe we would know who was involved in the damage. Maybe there's litigation and maybe that party that's involved in the utility side. So you know what? We can't put this into dirt because that could end up being part of the public record and deteriorate the anonymity factor. So I get that too. And that's one of those parts of legislation that I don't think we've even begun to consider yet. When there is a mandatory reporting function of legislation, what could that do to the anonymity factor if there is a litigation or a claim made on a specific damage? And I don't even think the CGA has considered this either. Maybe a certain state has, but I don't think it's been considered broadly, and that's where you have two legislative authorities or regulations or laws conflicting with each other, and that's problematic. Joe, thanks for joining me today. I am glad we got a chance to do this. The timing was right to do this, and probably you're going to be a guest again at some point. I appreciate your time doing this.

Josef Rosenberg (39:53):

Absolutely. Look forward to it. Alright, thanks Joe. Wonderful. Thank you so much for having me today.

Mike Sullivan (40:01):

That's going to wrap things up on the Safety Moment podcast. I want to thank our producers stories and strategies and Emily Page for managing us today, and I hope you choose to follow this podcast on any directory you're listening on, and please do leave a rating. You can follow us on X at utility safety. We're also on Instagram and Facebook. If you'd like to send us a note, maybe you have an episode idea, you can email us at info@utilitiesafety.ca and just put podcast in the subject head. I'm Mike Sullivan. I'm glad

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