

Case Study:

Hydro One Spring 2026 Dig Safe Campaign

The Challenge

Hydro One serves more than 1.5 million customers across many rural and small-town communities, where outdoor projects such as landscaping, planting, fencing, and excavation are common. With safety as a top priority, raising awareness of safe digging practices is critical to helping reduce risks, prevent damage to underground infrastructure, and avoid service disruptions during peak digging season.

The Approach

To maximize participation

- Hydro One centered the campaign around the memorable "Click Before You Dig" call to action, encouraging Ontarians to request a free locate before beginning any digging or excavation project.
- Clear visuals, recognizable safety messaging, and direct links to Ontario Dig Authority's locate request service simplified the process and reduced barriers to taking immediate action.

To maximize reach

- Hydro One used a multi-channel strategy spanning radio, billboards, social media, and digital display advertising to extend awareness across the province.

To maximize effectiveness

- Hydro One worked closely with Ontario Dig Authority and the Electricity Safety Authority to target awareness efforts in areas where additional education could have the greatest impact, helping ensure resources were directed where they were needed most.

The Outcome

The campaign delivered strong awareness and engagement results across Ontario. Dig Safe messaging reached more than 4 million people, generated 48.5 million impressions, and drove more than 53,000 visits to Hydro One's safety webpage.

The campaign achieved a Public Awareness of Electrical Safety Score (PAES) of 81%, exceeding its target and demonstrating a strong impact on public awareness and understanding of electrical safety.

Additional survey research found that 70% of individuals who recalled seeing the campaign indicated they would go online to request a locate before digging. Pre- and post-exposure testing also showed a 10% increase in the percentage of respondents who said they would *definitely call or click before digging* after viewing the campaign ads, while 89% reported the ads helped them understand how to stay safe. Together, these findings demonstrate the campaign's ability to both educate audiences and encourage safer digging behaviours.

Lessons Learned

1. This campaign reinforced the importance of reaching audiences when safety information is most relevant. Launching during peak digging season helped connect the message to real-world actions and decisions.
2. The results also highlighted the value of consistent, multi-channel messaging. Repetition across radio, outdoor, social, and digital channels helped strengthen awareness and improve recall of the "Click Before You Dig" message.
3. Finally, the campaign demonstrated that effective safety education goes beyond awareness. By providing a clear, actionable next step through Ontario Dig Authority, the campaign helped encourage safer digging behaviours across Ontario

Images

