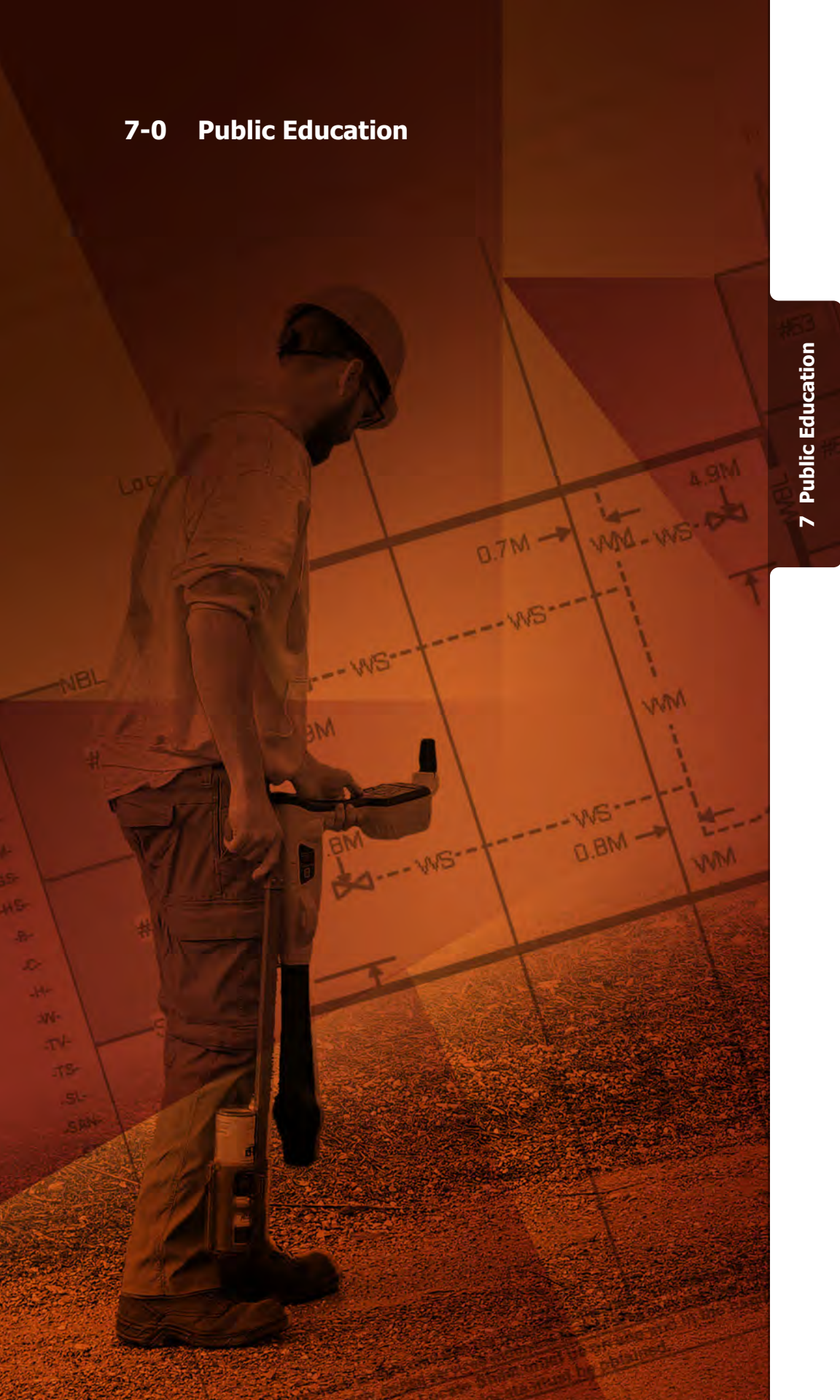


# 7-0 Public Education



## 7-0 Public Education Best Practices

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### 7-1: Identifying Target Audiences and Their Needs

**Practice Statement:** To effectively promote damage prevention and influence/improve damage prevention habits, it is necessary to identify the target audience, establish what their education and awareness needs are, and to create a communications package that is tailored to those needs.

**Practice Description:** Education and awareness campaigns fundamentally aim to inspire behavioral changes that minimize utility damage and enhance public safety. A broad and diverse array of organizations and individuals stand to gain from such damage prevention initiatives.

To identify the target audience:

- Examine damage data and trends
- Categorize incidents by frequency & severity
- Rank and prioritize incidents

To effectively communicate educational objectives:

- Clearly identify the issues and root causes.
- Describe new behaviour and establish what it would take to change behaviour
- Reinforce changes in behaviour

Examples of target audiences may include affected public, emergency services, public officials, excavators and contractors.

### 7-2: Develop a Public Awareness Plan

**Practice Statement:** Develop an effective, measurable, and continuously improving Public Awareness Plan to meet the needs of identified target audiences.

**Practice Description:** The scope of this plan includes processes, programs, and campaigns intended to reduce and prevent damages. The plan sets goals, allocates sufficient resources, defines timelines and includes effectiveness evaluations through data-driven decision making and analytics to drive continuous improvement.

### 7-3: Repealed

## 7-4: Create an Effective Damage Prevention Message

**Practice Statement:** When promoting Damage Prevention, create a message that is understood and retained.

**Practice Description:** An effective message should motivate the targeted audience to positive action. The objective is to put desired behaviours into practice quickly, easily, and repeatedly. Direct audiences to the local notification service or "clickbeforeyoudig.com" website to submit a line locate request if they are performing any ground disturbance.

## 7-5: Promote the Damage Prevention Message

**Practice Statement:** Promoting the Damage Prevention message by finding creative ways to influence the target audience to not only receive and remember the message, but also to modify their behaviors accordingly. Multiple stakeholders with similar goals and messages can partner together to reduce costs and maximize impact.

**Practice Description:** Promoting the Damage Prevention message can be done through a variety of means and media. Direct mailings involve delivering a specific message to a particular target audience (e.g. - specific geographic area, market sector, or demographic category).

Professionally designed messages can be effective at securing the attention of a broader target audience. (e.g., advertising, digital media, brochures, sponsorships).

Where possible take advantage of free media, such as social media, public service announcements made by newspaper, radio, television, and available websites.

Promotional items present a method of promoting key messages and are branding opportunities.

## 7-6: Establish Strategic Relationships

**Practice Statement:** Develop strategic working relationships to assist in the promotion of damage prevention.

**Practice Description:** Strategic relationships can be developed with others who have shared or similar issues, interests, and needs. These could include industry associations, equipment manufacturers and trade groups. Other stakeholders can include government agencies, emergency responders and media.

## **7-7: Measure Results for Improvement Opportunities**

**Practice Statement:** An effective Public Awareness Plan should incorporate evaluations to gauge program success, identify effective strategies and shortcomings, and implement a process for applying lessons learned towards continuous improvement.

**Practice Description:** Assess the impact of awareness campaigns by surveying the target audience through various means such as direct mail or telephone. This evaluation will help determine the extent of behavioral changes induced by the campaign. Monitor damage statistics, including the DIRT report for changes and trends, and identify opportunities of continuous improvement.