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DESIGN ALERT ON IMPORTANCE OF SHOWING ALL EXISTING UTILITIES ON DESIGN DOCUMENTS

ISSUE:

VA pays for damage done by the contractor to existing utilities not shown on the contract drawings.

BACKGROUND:

The ProCATS database shows repeated construction changes and delays caused by a failure to fully show existing utilities on the design documents.

DISCUSSION:

There are numerous instances where change orders were issued for the repair or replacement of existing damaged utility items. Contractors claim they are not responsible for existing items that are not shown on the contract drawings since they are not aware of them. Showing existing conditions is the A/E's responsibility. For instance:

- A contractor was paid extra to repair existing underground TV conduits and cables damaged when installing storm piping in a parking lot;
- When removing a tree, several alarm wires were destroyed because these underground lines were not shown on the contract drawings;
- When installing drain lines several electrical ductbanks were encountered, the concrete encasement was knocked off and a number of conduits were cracked; and
- Exterior light poles were knocked down on a project because they were not shown on the contract drawings.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSION:

VA personnel responsible for design projects should remind their A/E, it's important the A/E shows all existing utilities within or directly adjacent to the construction area. Utilities can be in or outside the building, above or below ground, and should be shown whether they are reused or not.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Contact Satish Sehgal at 202-565-5032 in the Standards Service (187C).