

Telephone Cable Digups Give Bell Headaches

Dig-ups of telephone cable, occurring on the average of twice a day, are presenting a serious service problem to the Michigan Bell Telephone Company and its customers.

Last year contractors' trenching machines, power shovels and bulldozers sliced into underground telephone cable 735 times, causing service disruptions for thousands of phone users.

"The problem is particularly acute in the Detroit metropolitan area where building excavations and construction of sewer lines, highways, and water mains pose almost a constant hazard to underground phone lines," said J.W. Allen, general plant manager of Michigan Bell's metro area.

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"The company will tell contractors, builders and home owners where telephone cables are buried," he said. "In critical locations, a telephone man will be sent to the site to show cable routes."

The cable dig-ups are costly. Michigan Bell spent more than \$100,000 last year to repair the damage. Far more important, however, is the fact that service interruptions caused missed messages and inconvenience to telephone users when the cables were broken, Allen pointed out. A cable break can cut off a town or area completely from long distance calls for several hours.

The problem could worsen in the future unless those who dig for a living exercise more caution, Allen said. Michigan Bell is committed to a policy of burying or placing more and more cable underground.

ALLEN SAID that in 1967 Michigan Bell had 9,017 miles of cable underground. The company now has 19,036 miles of cable beneath the surface.

Michigan Bell takes extensive precautions to safeguard buried cable. It erects warning signs above buried cables. Visits are made to contractors, builders and excavators. Checks are made of construction permits and efforts are made to warn contractors in advance of digging.

ALLEN SAID home owners planning to erect a fence or plant a tree in areas where telephone facilities are buried underground are urged to call repair service before digging.

Generally, he said, phone lines lie in a direct path from terminals in the rear of the property to the point where the wires enter the house. Home owners can avoid cutting off their own phone service by making themselves aware of this stretch between the backyard terminal and the location where telephone lines enter their home.

Those who dig up telephone facilities are liable for the cost of labor and material used in the restoration of service, Allen said. Such payments, however, cannot begin to compensate phone users for the inconvenience.

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8.50-14	\$17.95	8.75-14 \$17.95
8.75-14	\$17.95	9.00-14 \$17.95
9.00-14	\$17.95	9.25-14 \$17.95
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7.25-14	\$16.95	7.75-14 \$16.95
8.00-14	\$17.95	8.25-14 \$17.95
8.25-14	\$17.95	8.50-14 \$17.95
8.50-14	\$17.95	8.75-14 \$17.95
8.75-14	\$17.95	9.00-14 \$17.95
9.00-14	\$17.95	9.25-14 \$17.95
9.25-14	\$17.95	9.50-14 \$17.95
9.50-14	\$17.95	9.75-14 \$17.95
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