



Background

Before digging in Utah, state law requires an excavator (contractor, homeowner, etc.) to have the dig site area checked for underground utility lines. Instead of contacting each utility company individually to ask if they have underground lines at the dig site, the excavator can contact Blue Stakes of Utah 811 (Blue Stakes), which has a membership association of over 600 utility companies in Utah. Blue Stakes of Utah 811 operates as a notification center - a communication link between the excavator and the utility companies for locating purposes.

Blue Stakes captures information from the excavator about who is digging, for what purpose, the location of the dig site, and specific marking instructions. That information is compiled by Blue Stakes into a "locate request" document commonly known as a "ticket." Blue Stakes sends the ticket to the utility companies that have underground lines in the dig site area. Each utility company is then responsible to mark their own lines at the described dig site using colored paint and/or flags.

Some utility companies send their own in-house personnel to mark their lines, but other utility owners hire "contract locating" companies to mark their lines for them. For example, Rocky Mountain Power and Comcast hire a company called USIC to mark their lines. One technician from USIC could mark two different utility lines at one property. There is a common misperception in the field that Blue Stakes marks the lines, when in reality, Blue Stakes has no field personnel. Blue Stakes is actually more like "dispatch" for the utility companies.

Blue Stakes is a non-profit organization that is funded by the utility companies in Utah. The service to get utility lines marked is provided to excavators at no cost to them; funding our notification center and marking the utility lines in the field is all paid for by the utility companies. Our two directives are to process the locate request tickets and to provide damage prevention education. Excavators can create locate requests by calling 811 or via our web site www.bluestakes.org. The goal is safety. Damaging utility lines can result in property damage, service interruptions, personal injury or even death.

Locate Specialist Trainee position

Locate Specialist (LS) is the most important position within the Blue Stakes organization. The LS's role is to answer incoming calls and/or process online ticket requests from excavators and create locate request tickets. In some ways, every call/online request is the same because the same basic information must be captured on every ticket: excavator contact info, excavation description, dig site location, and specific marking instructions; but in other ways every call/online request is different because of the wide variety of excavation activities and dig site locations.

There will be some easy locate requests from homeowners for installing sprinkler systems and fences. But there will also be very complex locate requests from professional contractors doing such varied activities as roadway reconstruction, installing utility lines, soil sampling and drilling to extract oil & natural gas.

Some locations will be at a single address; others will be for a stretch along a road, canal, or railroad track; and others will be in very rural areas that can only be identified with latitude/longitude coordinates.

When no address exists at the dig site, the excavator may provide travelling instructions, which at times are of the "over the river and through the woods" variety. For each ticket, the LS will use Blue Stakes' computer mapping system (similar to Google Maps but with better data) to locate the dig site and then draw a polygon on the map outlining the area to be checked for utility lines.

On each locate request, the LS is responsible to capture all necessary information and create easy-to-understand directions that the utility company personnel can follow to get to the dig site location and then to check the specific area for utility lines. The marking instructions on the ticket become legally binding—the excavator must dig only within the described dig area and the utility companies must mark their lines in that location within the specified timeframe. If an underground line is damaged, the ticket document will provide guidance in determining liability. ***Thus, the LS must have great attention to detail and the ability to focus on every locate request, understanding that an error on the ticket may result in damage occurring in the field.***

A qualified candidate for the LS Trainee position will be able to:

- Type at least 35 WPM without needing to look at the keyboard while typing.
- Be familiar with computers in general, including Microsoft Office software such as Outlook, Word & Excel.
- Be able to analyze, retain information, and exhibit good judgement while adhering to company policies and procedures.
- Have proficient map skills, matching locations on an electronic map with the written description, be comfortable and confident in following directions, etc.
- Be able to think spatially – be able to visualize in your mind a dig site location, including its length & width.
- Not be frustrated by swings in call volume.
- Be confident and willing to ask questions and probe for details until you have all of the needed information.
- Be able to effectively present information and respond to questions in an accurate, professional, and courteous manner.
- Provide helpful, patient, polite & friendly customer service, even to callers who are rude and/or unprepared.
- Be willing to ask questions, improve knowledge, and correct mistakes.



Pay, Hours & Benefits

- LS Training hourly wage is \$17.50 through the entire training/probationary period.
- LS hourly wage is \$18.00 after successful completion of the training/probationary period of around 90 days.
- Annual merit reviews and wage increases of 0-7% (average ~4%) within the wage range.
- The Notification Center operating hours are Monday-Friday, 8:00am-4:00pm. Most work shifts will be between these hours. Training hours may vary.
- Mandatory 2-hour coordination meetings for all employees are scheduled on Saturday mornings about three times a year.
- Holidays - 10 paid holidays (8 hours pay for full time employee, 4 hours for part time):
 - New Year's Day
 - Presidents Day
 - Memorial Day
 - Independence Day
 - Pioneer Day
 - Labor Day
 - Thanksgiving
 - Day after Thanksgiving
 - Christmas Eve Day
 - Christmas day
- Paid Time Off – PTO is used for any time off, like vacation, personal, sick, etc. A one-time PTO allocation of 20 hours is provided upon hire into a benefits-eligible position after successfully completing a probationary period as a temporary employee. Full time employees accrue up to 80 hours per year during the initial year of service, up to 120 hours per year during the 1st through 5th years, up to 160 hours per year during the 6th through 10th years, and up to 200 hours per year during the 11th year and on. Part time employees do not accrue PTO.
- Insurance – Full time employees are eligible for health and dental insurance; Blue Stakes pays 80% of the premium, employee pays 20%. Plans for individual, family, etc. Part time employees are not eligible for insurance benefits.



- Additional Benefits
 - Wellness Benefit up to \$700 yearly per annual budget approval.
 - Incentive Bonus up to \$1400 yearly per annual budget approval.
 - Internet allowance eligibility up to \$100 monthly.
 - IRA retirement fund – You can contribute pre-tax earnings to a SIMPLE IRA fund; Blue Stakes will match your contribution up to 3%.
 - Tuition reimbursement – for classes related to construction, engineering, geography, planning, communications, etc.

Working from home

- A LS may be assigned to work from home, upon approval from the Director of Notification Center Operations. Employees selected for the WAH Program are subject to the provisions and policies contained in the Blue Stakes Employee Handbook and other procedural documentation.
- Blue Stakes will provide a computer and internet allowance upon successfully completing a probationary period as a temporary employee. ***The trainee will be required to provide their own sufficient internet for at home training/work until training is complete and they are hired as a regular employee.***
- A LS may be required to come into the office if unable to work from home (power outage, internet down, etc.).

Probationary Period – Approximately 90 days

Blue Stakes outsources its applicant screening and hiring to Elwood Staffing. New hires will be Elwood employees for approximately 90 days, which is a probationary period to determine if the new hire is a good fit for the LS position. Assuming the new-hire LS is doing well, he/she may be hired as a regular Blue Stakes employee around 90 days if performance is excellent.

NOTE: Benefits, including insurance, PTO accrual, internet allowance, wellness and bonus incentives and tuition reimbursement do NOT take effect until the new LS trainee is hired as a regular employee. Employees are normally eligible for IRA benefits starting the second year of employment. (Paid holidays are paid during the 90-day probationary period.)

Interested applicants should apply and contact hiring@bluestakes.org and anticipate taking applicant assessments for typing and drug use.



JOB DESCRIPTION

TITLE:	LOCATE SPECIALIST TRAINEE
REPORTS TO:	DIRECTOR OF NOTIFICATION CENTER OPERATIONS
FLSA STATUS:	NON-EXEMPT
CLASSIFICATION:	FULL TIME TEMPORARY EMPLOYEE
WAGE:	\$17.50
DATE PREPARED:	APRIL 3, 2023

Summary Description

Locate Specialist Trainee (LS Trainee) learns to receive, process, and follow through on customer inquiries regarding underground utility locate requests under the direct supervision of the Director of Notification Center Operations (DNCO) and general guidance from the Education Coordinator (EC) and/or Team Coordinator (TC).

Essential Job Duties/Responsibilities for Training Period:

- Processes incoming telephone locate requests accurately and efficiently to produce a valid locate request.
- Performs various functions associated with new and existing locate requests, including but not limited to update, 2nd notice, retransmit, cancel, re-mark, and duplicate requests.
- Provides non-excavation (plan & design) information, as needed/assigned.
- Performs basic research requests, as needed/assigned.
- Educates customers about Blue Stakes' role as the communication link between excavators, locators, and member utilities.
- Performs and analyzes quality assurance by listening to recorded phone calls as assigned.
- Maintains acceptable performance standards, including but not limited to availability, attendance, punctuality, quality (monthly evaluations & problem tickets), average handle time (AHT), personal unavailable codes, and positive communication and response directives.
- Maintains acceptable home office environment if assigned to work from home.
- Works assigned shift during business operating hours (8 a.m. – 4 p.m. Monday-Friday, except recognized holidays).

Additional Job Duties/Responsibilities:

- Continues training to include online locate request processing, and more comprehensive and complex locate request processing tasks.
- Promotes web utilization.
- Performs other duties and responsibilities as assigned.

Qualifications:

The trainee must be able to learn, comprehend, and perform each essential duty accurately and completely during prescribed stages within the training period. In addition to required proficiency in each of the competencies listed above, the requirements listed below represent the knowledge, skill, and/or ability required.

Education/Experience:

- High School equivalency required, Associates degree preferred or any combination of education, experience and training which provides the following knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Skill/Knowledge/Abilities:

- Ability to type 35 WPM.



- Must have excellent customer service skills.
- Professional telephone skills to include using active listening skills with callers and addressing their needs as it applies to the Blue Stakes of Utah 811 processes.
- Regular and prompt attendance is essential; mental effort and focus is required daily.
- Correct use of the English language; must be able to communicate effectively verbally and in writing using proper grammar and spelling.
- Ability to follow and interpret written and verbal instructions.
- Ability to analyze information provided by the customer to create clear, precise instructions.
- Ability to analyze problems, and to recommend changes to resolve problems.
- Ability to use logic and critical thinking skills to prevent errors that may cause loss of life and / or property.
- Ability to maintain effective working relationships with other employees and the public in person, on the telephone, and through electronic communications.
- Ability to be self-directed to succeed in changing environments.
- Ability to be flexible and make changes, as necessary.
- Maintain confidentiality and security of information obtained.
- Ability to read, search, and understand locations and positioning in a mapping application.
- Ability to learn and apply the knowledge of Blue Stakes Operations and Procedures, including learning of the geography in Utah and the "Damage to Underground Utility Facilities Act".
- Ability to perform functions associated with computer systems and software programs including: Norfield Ticket Entry, NICE Phone System, Microsoft applications (Teams, Outlook, Word, Excel, Power Point, OneDrive, SharePoint, and OneNote) is helpful.
- Knowledge of basic office equipment, such as computers and softphones.

Working Conditions and Physical Demands:

- Indoor Notification Center/office environment; Ergonomic workstation options, telecommuting option
- Job requires sitting or standing at an office desk for extended periods of time
- While performing the duties of this job, the employee is required to view computer screens and wear telephone headset equipment for extended periods of time.
- Ability to receive detailed information through verbal communication and make fine discriminations in sounds.
- This position has exposure to stressful situations as a result of human behavior. Work is often performed under deadlines and time constraints.

Additional eligibility qualifications to advance to a Locate Specialist I (LS I) regular employee:

- Process assigned locate requests independently without assistance from the EC or others
- Maintain a satisfactory work record in performance of job responsibilities
- Follow company policies and procedures
- Meet and maintain WAH policy guidelines and requirements
- Be in good standing and not under any formal performance improvement plan
- Effectively work a regular schedule with minimal absenteeism and/or tardiness
- Successfully complete the Regular Employee Hiring Checklist

Accept, Understand, and Confirm:

I have read the above and understand that it is intended to describe the general content of and requirements for performing this job. It is not an exhaustive statement of duties, responsibilities, or requirements. I understand that this description does not preclude my supervisor's authority to add or change duties and responsibilities and understand that the performance of other duties will be required from time to time in order to meet the company's needs. I understand that my employment with the company is at-will. I have been given a copy of this description.

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____