If it’s spring, summer or fall in Fort Wayne, there is probably a public construction project happening near you. Much of the construction is being done by contractors hired by Fort Wayne City Utilities. City Utilities’ projects are typically done for one of several reasons:

* To improve the service we provide to you by replacing aging or failing infrastructure;
* To improve quality of life and help our community grow by increasing capacity;
* To comply with regulatory requirements to protect the environment.

Even when construction work is being done for the right reasons, it can be disruptive, dirty and inconvenient. City Utilities’ top priorities when doing construction are to keep you, your family and the contractor safe, to finish the work as quickly as possible and to keep you informed as the work progresses. Here are some tips to keep in mind when you learn that a utility project will be taking place near you:

1. As part of the preparation for construction, the contractor may need to remove or trim trees, shrubs, or other landscaping that is located in the public right-of-way. Plans for tree removal will be discussed during a “Meet the Contractor” meeting, or you may call City Utilities to learn more. If tree or landscape removal is to be done on private property, City Utilities or the contractor will discuss plans with the property owner.
2. For large construction projects, the contractor may need a place to store equipment and materials. The contractor is responsible for arranging a “staging area” and may enter into an agreement with a nearby property owner for use of a privately owned property for this purpose. The contractor may pay the property owner for use of the property or provide some other sort of compensation to the property owner.
3. You can help keep construction sites safe. If construction is going on in your neighborhood, be sure that your children and other relatives know that they must stay away from holes being dug by the contractor and away from equipment – both when construction is being done and at night and on weekends when workers may have gone home. The contractor is responsible for maintaining a safe construction zone by fencing the area, providing barricades and securing equipment. But it is important that neighbors stay away from areas that could be dangerous.
4. The contractor will make every effort to maintain traffic and to provide access to your home or business if they are working in front of your property. However, it is your responsibility to follow marked detours and obey construction site signage. If you are walking or driving near heavy construction equipment, make eye contact with the operator before crossing in front of the equipment to be sure the operator sees you, and always follow the directions given by construction workers if they are directing traffic around equipment.

The best thing about a utility construction project is that it will end. When it does, the benefits of improved service and reliability will outweigh the inconveniences.

Much more information about City Utilities’ construction projects and what to expect during construction may be found at www.cityoffortwayne.org/utilities/projects-and-events-calendar. For project-specific questions, please call the Citizen Services Center at 311 or (260) 427-8311.