

YOUR FIRST TWO DAYS AT NOVA

A guide for new crew members

Nova Underground · 471 S Cemetery St, Norcross, GA 30071

NU-OPS-011-E · Give this to every new hire at the offer, not on day one.

READ THIS FIRST

Welcome. You were hired because somebody talked to you and thought you'd fit here.

This guide tells you exactly what your first two days look like. **There are no surprises and no tests in here.** Everything you'll be asked to do on day one and day two is written on these pages. Read it before you show up and you'll walk in ahead of most people.

One thing to understand about this company: **we write everything down.** How we dig, how the truck gets loaded, what a good day looks like, what happens when somebody messes up. That's on purpose. It means you will never get in trouble for something nobody told you. If it isn't written down, it isn't a rule.

The flip side is real too. Once you've been shown something and you've signed that you were shown it, it counts.

BEFORE YOU COME IN

Where and when

Where	471 S Cemetery St, Norcross, GA 30071
What time	6:30 AM. Not 6:30 in the parking lot — 6:30 ready to go. Come at 6:15.
Who to ask for	Your supervisor. His name and cell number are in your offer text.

Bring these

- **Your own work boots.** We supply everything else. We do not supply boots. **No boots, no yard** — you'll be sent home to get them and you won't be paid for that time.
- **Long pants.** No shorts, ever, on any Nova site.
- **Your ID documents** — driver's license **and** Social Security card, or a US passport. This is federal paperwork and it is not optional. You have **3 business days** from your first day to produce them. **No documents by day three means no day four.** That's the law, not our policy.
- **A lunch and water.** Some days there's nowhere to stop.

We give you

Hard hat · high-visibility vest · safety glasses · gloves. You wear all of it from the moment you walk in the yard until you leave. Including on classroom days. It's a habit, not a costume — habits are what save you when you're tired and not thinking.

DAY ONE — AT THE YARD

Day one you are **not** going to a job site. You'll be at the yard all day, learning the things that are too important to learn on a live job while everybody's rushing.

Your trainer has a checklist. He'll initial each thing as you do it. At the end of the day you sign it too. That's your record that you were trained — it protects you as much as it protects us.

How the day runs

Time	What
6:30 – 7:15	Paperwork, ID documents, your gear, and how you get paid
7:15 – 8:45	The seven rules. The most important 90 minutes of your first year
8:45 – 10:15	The truck — how it's loaded, where every tool lives, how you reset it
10:15 – 12:00	How we dig. Marks, potholing, safety zones. You'll be in the dirt
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch
12:30 – 1:30	Photos and paperwork — how we prove the work got done so we get paid
1:30 – 2:15	How accountability works here
2:15 – 3:00	Equipment walk-around
3:00 – 3:30	Clean up, questions, and where you're going tomorrow

THE SEVEN RULES

These are the rules that keep you alive and keep you employed. Your trainer will go through every one. You'll be asked to say some of them back. Learn these seven things and you'll be fine here.

1. Marks are sacred

Colored paint and flags on the ground show where buried utilities are. **No marks, no digging.** You never scrub out, cover, or re-paint someone else's marks. If the marks look wrong or faded, you say so — you don't guess.

2. Inside the tolerance zone, hand tools only

Within **24 inches on either side of a mark**, no machine touches the ground. Shovel only. And you *shave* the dirt — you don't stab down into it.

Why: a machine wins every argument with a gas line. So does a sharp shovel driven straight down.

3. Pothole before every crossing

Before we bore or dig across a utility, we dig a small hole by hand and look at it with our eyes. Every single time. "It's probably deep enough" is a guess, and guesses are what put people in the hospital.

4. If you hit something, you STOP and you SAY SO — immediately

This is the most important rule in this guide, so read it twice.

If you hit a line — any line — you stop, you get everybody back, and you tell somebody right now.

If it's **gas**: everybody moves **upwind and uphill**, away from the hole. No phones, no engines, no truck doors near the hole. **Call 911 first.** Then your supervisor. Then 811.

Here's the part people don't believe until somebody says it out loud: **hitting a line is a Tuesday. It happens to good people doing everything right.** You will not be fired for hitting something.

Covering it up or not saying anything is the end of your career here, same day. No warning, no second chance. That's the deal, and it's the same deal for everybody including the owner.

5. Cones out before tools out

If we're working in or near a road, the safety zone gets set up **first** — before a single tool comes off the truck. Not "in a minute." First.

6. Never run a red-tagged machine

If a machine has a red tag on it, it's broken and it does not run. Not to move it ten feet. Not "just this once." Running a red-tagged machine is a firing offense.

If you think a machine is unsafe, **you can stop it.** Nobody here will give you a hard time for that, ever. Say it to your crew lead.

7. One caller

On every job, one person talks to the customer, the inspector, and the homeowner — your crew lead. If somebody walks up to you with questions or complaints, you're polite, you point them to him, and you keep working.

This isn't about keeping you quiet. It's that one wrong sentence to a homeowner can cost this company thousands of dollars, and that's not a weight you should be carrying on your second day.

WHAT YOU'LL ACTUALLY DO ON DAY ONE

You're not going to sit and listen for eight hours. You'll be doing these things yourself, with your trainer watching:

- **Reset a truck** — top to bottom, by yourself, so you know where everything lives
- **Count the safety load** — 20 cones, 2 signs and stands, 4 delineators, 2 spare vests, 1 stop/slow paddle. Counted out at the start of a job, counted back in at the end
- **Hand-dig a pothole** on a practice utility — probe first, shave the dirt, spoil on the tarp
- **Set a full cone taper** by yourself, and have the spacing checked
- **Take a before / during / after photo set** and file it where it belongs
- **Fill out a Daily Field Report**

If you can't do one of these yet, that's fine — you'll do it again. Nobody gets pushed past something they haven't got.

DAY TWO — YOUR FIRST REAL JOB SITE

Day two you go out with a crew.

You will be assigned to **one specific person** for the whole day. That's your buddy. Where he goes, you go. Ask him everything. That's what he's there for — it's his job that day, not a favor.

What you may do on day two

Carry, fetch, hand-dig, hold, watch, ask questions, run the tape, keep the site clean. **Ask a lot of questions.** Day two is the cheapest day of your career to ask something you think sounds dumb.

What you may NOT do on day two

- Touch any powered machine
- Work inside the tolerance zone unless somebody is watching you
- Talk to the customer, the inspector, or a homeowner
- Sign a bore log

None of that is about trust. It's a sequence — everybody goes through it, including people with twenty years in.

What you'll be doing yourself on day two

- **The pre-trip inspection** on the truck — out loud, with your crew lead listening
- **Connecting the trailer** — the whole sequence, including the light test
- **Securing the load**
- **Reading the work order out loud with your crew lead.** By the end of the day you should be able to say what we get paid on for that job — by the foot, by the hole, whatever it is. Knowing that is what separates a laborer from somebody who's going to run a crew someday
- **Walking the ticket against the marks** — what's painted, what's missing
- **Writing one line on the JSA** (the safety plan) and signing it with everybody else
- **Setting the safety zone** before tools come off the truck

- **Hand-potholing a real crossing** — this is the big one for day two
- **Taking the photo set and filling out your own Daily Field Report**

Three conversations you'll have on day two

Your crew lead owes you these. If you don't get them, tell your supervisor — that's not you snitching, that's the system working.

1. **In the morning:** "Here's your one job today, and here's what good looks like."
2. **At midday:** "Show me what you've got." — he'll correct you at the hole, at noon, not at 4 PM when it's rework.
3. **At the end of the day:** one thing you did well, one thing to fix tomorrow, and "are you good for 6:30?"

Your supervisor will also come see you before noon. He'll ask you what you've done that day. Answer him straight.

HOW YOU GET PAID

Type	W-2 hourly employee. Not a contractor. Taxes withheld properly
Overtime	Paid after 40 hours in a week
How often	Every two weeks, direct deposit
Setting it up	You'll get an invite to QuickBooks Workforce. Your W-4, your bank info, your pay stubs all live there. Set it up on day one or two — that's what makes sure your first check is right
First 60 days	A working evaluation. You're looking at us too

No day rates. No cash. No 1099s for field crew. If anybody ever offers you any of those things at this company, that's a mistake and you should tell the owner.

HOW ACCOUNTABILITY WORKS HERE

We use a points system. Your trainer will walk you through the whole thing on day one and you'll sign that you've seen it. The short version:

- Points only attach to **things that are written down** — a missed photo, an unsigned truck log, a skipped safety plan. **Never to attitude or personality.**
- Every point has to name the rule and the document it came from. If we can't point to it in a book, we can't point you.
- Points **fall off after 90 days.** Clean work erases history.
- You sign every entry. Signing means "I was told" — not "I agree."

And the other direction, which matters more: 90 days with zero points and you get named in the Friday note, and you go to the front of the line for raises, lead spots, and the crew you want to be on.

There's also a short list of things that end your employment the same day — no points, no ladder. Your trainer will read it to you out loud, word for word. The big one is in Rule 4: **hiding a strike.**

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DAY TWO

Nobody expects you to be useful on day one. Here's the actual path:

Day 2	Shadow — attached to your buddy
Day 3	Assist — hand-dig, pothole, set zones, run the photos
Day 4	Perform — your role's core work start to finish, crew lead watching

Day 5	First solo task — one job, alone, checked after
Week 2	You get put on one machine track
Day 30	Sit-down with your supervisor. Where you stand, what's next

How you make more money here

Get qualified on machines. There are three steps for every machine, and they're the same for everybody:

1. **Untrained** — you stay off it
2. **Restricted** — you can be on it only with the machine's assigned operator watching
3. **Qualified** — three watched runs on three different days, then you can run it on assignment

Nobody is qualified on anything on their first day, no matter what they did at their last company. If you're as good as you say, you'll be qualified by Thursday and it cost you nothing to prove it.

The seat we're always short on is **locating**. If you show any aptitude for it in your first week, say so. That's the fastest raise in this company.

QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK

What if I don't understand something?

Say so, right then. Every single time. The most expensive thing you can do here is nod when you don't understand — that's how lines get hit and how days get redone.

What if somebody tells me to do something that contradicts this guide?

Do the safe thing, then tell your supervisor what you were told. You will not get in trouble for this, and we want to know. On Friday of your first week your supervisor is going to ask you this exact question on purpose.

What if I'm going to be late or can't make it?

Call. Not a text at 7:15 — a call, before 6:30, to your supervisor. Everybody has a bad morning. A no-call is a completely different thing.

What if I get hurt?

Tell somebody immediately, no matter how small. We have a written process for it. The worst thing you can do is tough it out and mention it three days later.

What if I don't have a ride some day?

Tell your supervisor before it happens, not that morning. You'd be surprised what can get worked out with notice. Nothing can get worked out at 6:25.

YOUR NOTES

Write down anything you want to ask. Nobody will look at this but you.

The short version of all of this

Show up on time. Wear your gear. Ask when you don't know. Never hide a mistake.

Do those four things and everything else here is learnable.

We're glad you're here.