3.4.2 Minimum Bury Depth

The minimum depth of bury is the distance from the top of the utility pipe to the ground surface or, if a casing pipe is installed, from the top of the casing pipe to the ground surface. The depths provided in this section are minimums. The Department may require deeper bury depths depending on circumstances.

3.4.2.1 Trenchless Methods

The minimum depth of bury will vary depending on the casing pipe and drill hole diameter and the method of trenchless installation. Trenchless methods include bore and jack, HDD, pipe ramming, and tunneling (see Section 3.6.8 for additional information on these methods). The minimum bury depths are shown in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1. Minimum Bury Depths using Trenchless Methods

Method	Minimum Depth of Cover
Bore and Jack or Auger[c]	3 feet
HDD[a] (longitudinal and transverse installations)	
Drilled/ream hole diameter (inches)	
2–6	5 feet
>6–15	12 times hole diameter
>15–36[b]	15 feet or greater
Pipe ramming	
Pipe or casing diameter (inches)	
2–6	4 feet
>6–14	6 times pipe diameter
>14–72	8 feet
Driving/Moling/Pneumatic Hammer	3 feet or 10 times the diameter, whichever is greater
Tunneling	5 feet or 1.5 times the diameter of the bore, whichever is greater

[a] These minimum cover depths apply to HDD installations on roadways with limited controlled access, partially controlled access, or non-controlled access. The minimum cover depth for HDD installations of any size on fully controlled access roadways is 15 feet.

[b] The minimum cover depth for HDD installations of pipe greater than 36 inches in diameter shall be 15 feet and may be greater. These large HDD installations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

[C] Auger is limited to 6” or less in diameter.

Regardless of which trenchless method is used, the minimum depth for crossing under ditches is 2 feet.

3.4.2.2 Open Cut Method

The minimum depth of bury for cased and uncased utility construction shall be as shown in Table 3-2.