

News Release

State Corporation Commission
Division of Information Resources



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For Immediate Release

APRIL IS NATIONAL SAFE DIGGING MONTH

RICHMOND – With spring here, eager homeowners are gearing up to start their outdoor projects. The State Corporation Commission’s (SCC) Division of Utility and Railroad Safety reminds Virginians to remember to call 811, the national call-before-you-dig number, before you reach for that shovel. Failure to do so can have serious consequences that may result in loss of essential utility services, personal injury or worse. Ensure that your buried utility lines are marked, and Dig with **C.A.R.E.**

C.A.R.E. means:

- **C**all 811 before you dig.
- **A**llow the required time for marking.
- **R**espect and protect the marks.
- **E**xcavate carefully.

Calling 811 connects you to VA811, the state’s one-call notification center which operates Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., excluding state and national holidays. Emergency notification service is available 365 days a year, 24 hours a day.

When you call VA811 concerning digging or demolition, trained staff will ask for important information about the planned work and then notify member utility operators that may have underground utility lines in your project area. Locators are sent to your project area within the time allowed by law to mark the approximate horizontal location on the ground within two feet of the underground utility lines. There is no cost for this service. Once marked, hand digging is required within 24 inches of these marks plus the width of the utility line if known. This area is the tolerance zone.

Any person excavating or demolishing within the tolerance zone where an underground utility line may be destroyed, damaged, dislocated or disturbed shall take all reasonable steps necessary to properly protect, support and backfill the underground utility lines. If during your excavation or demolition an underground utility line is damaged, including its attachments, covering and coating, immediately notify the operator of the underground utility line.

(more)

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If the damage to the underground utility line creates an emergency, take immediate steps to safeguard life, health and property. If damage to an underground utility line results in the escape of any flammable, toxic, hazardous or corrosive gas or liquid, promptly report the damage to the appropriate authorities by dialing 911.

Always be mindful when digging or demolishing. To learn more about Virginia's damage prevention program, contact the SCC Division of Utility and Railroad Safety at (804) 371-9980, or visit the Division's website at www.scc.virginia.gov/urs/mutility/index.aspx.