



NEWS RELEASE
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North Dakotans Reminded to Call Before You Dig
Governor Burgum Proclaims Safe Digging Month in North Dakota

BISMARCK, ND – Governor Doug Burgum has proclaimed April as Safe Digging Month in North Dakota. In recognition, the North Dakota Public Service Commission (PSC) is reminding everyone of the potential dangers and consequences of digging without first calling 8-1-1, North Dakota's Call-Before-You-Dig number.

"With construction season approaching, increased awareness and safety are a top priority not only in April but throughout the year. Hitting an underground utility line can result in severe injury or death, service interruptions or damage to the environment," said Commissioner Brian Kroshus, who holds the damage prevention portfolio. "Whether commercial or residential excavation, always contact North Dakota One Call before you dig. It's easy and it's the law."

North Dakota law requires anyone conducting an excavation to notify 8-1-1 at least two days in advance of digging. Personnel will be sent to mark the locations of the underground facilities, typically within a couple of days. The markings are valid for 21 days after they are placed. This process is coordinated through North Dakota One Call. The Public Service Commission's role is to enforce the requirements of the state's damage prevention laws and take action when violations are reported to the Commission. The PSC can levy a fine up to \$25,000 per violation depending on severity.

"Following this simple process, which has been law in North Dakota for two decades, may prevent you from damaging facilities and getting fined. More importantly, it may save your life!" said Commission Chairman Randy Christmann.

Each year North Dakota's underground utility infrastructure is jeopardized by unintentional damage from those who fail to call 8-1-1 to have underground facilities located prior to digging. Since 2009, the PSC has taken action in 97 cases related to violations of the Call-Before-You-Dig law. In total, approximately \$214,000 in fines have been assessed against companies or individuals who have violated the law. The consequences of striking an underground utility can be severe including explosions resulting in injury or death, service interruptions or damage to the environment.

"It's easier to call 811 before you dig, than 911 after you strike something dangerous," said Commissioner Julie Fedorchak.

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The significant residential and business growth occurring throughout North Dakota and the increased demand for pipeline infrastructure to support the energy industry have dramatically increased demand for the One-Call Program.

Safe Digging Month is endorsed each April by the North Dakota Public Service Commission, the Common Ground Alliance and the North Dakota One-Call Board. For more information about 8-1-1, visit the North Dakota One-Call Board's website at www.ndonecall.com. For safety tips, best practices and other information, visit the Common Ground Alliance website at www.commongroundalliance.com.

The North Dakota Public Service Commission is a constitutionally created state agency with authority to permit, site and regulate certain business activities in the state including electric and gas utilities, telecommunications companies, power plants, electric transmission lines, pipelines, railroads, grain elevators, auctioneers, commercial weighing devices, pipeline safety and coal mine reclamation. For more information, contact the Public Service Commission at (701) 328-2400 or www.psc.nd.gov.

Note to Media: A copy of the proclamation is included on the next page.

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State of
North Dakota
Office of the Governor

Doug Burgum
Governor

PROCLAMATION
SAFE DIGGING MONTH
APRIL 2018

WHEREAS, each year, the nation's underground utility infrastructure is jeopardized by unintentional damage by those who fail to call 8-1-1 to have underground facilities located prior to digging, resulting in possible service interruptions, damage to the environment, personal injury and even death; and

WHEREAS, in an effort to reduce these damages, the North Dakota Public Service Commission, the Common Ground Alliance and the North Dakota One Call Board promote the national Call-Before-You-Dig number, 8-1-1, as well as the use of safe digging practices; and

WHEREAS, designated by the Federal Communications Commission in 2005, 8-1-1 provides potential excavators and homeowners with a simple number to reach their local One Call Center to request utility locations at the intended dig site; and

WHEREAS, North Dakota law requires that anyone planning excavation or demolition must notify North Dakota 8-1-1, and if a facility must be located, personnel will be sent to mark the location of underground facilities at no cost to the requesting party; and

WHEREAS, by following safe digging practices, excavators and homeowners can save time and money by making a simple call to 8-1-1 in advance of any digging project, waiting the required amount of time for the utility to be located, respecting the location marks by maintaining visual definition throughout the excavation, and digging with care around the marks; and

WHEREAS, North Dakota excavators and homeowners are encouraged to know what is below, and to call 8-1-1 before digging to ensure the safety and connectivity of our communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, as Governor of the State of North Dakota, I do hereby proclaim April 2018, **SAFE DIGGING MONTH** in the State of North Dakota.



Doug Burgum
Governor

ATTEST:



Alvin A. Jaeger
Secretary of State