



Did you know you need to call 811 at least two business days before starting any digging project?

April is national Safe Digging month and a great time to remind everyone to practice safe digging techniques to prevent injuries, damages and service outages.

Underground utilities can be found in front yards, side yards, backyards and in the street and under sidewalks and driveways. As a matter of fact, in the United States, there are more pipelines than highways.

If your project involves any kind of excavating, then **you need to call 811 at least two business days prior to starting the digging.**

Calling 811 enables companies to come out and mark their underground utility lines within your project area so that you don't hit one potentially causing injuries to you or an outage to the neighborhood.

Calling 811 is a free service! Simply, call 811 and provide the location of your project. You can also go online to Texas811.org or download the Texas811 app. When you call or click 811, you are issued a "One Call ticket". Whoever is in charge of the digging, should have the ticket issued in their name. You must have your One Call ticket onsite with you throughout the duration of the project.

The utility locators will mark their lines with flags and/or paint or mark the area "all clear". We ask that you do your own due diligence too. If you hire a contractor, make sure they call or click 811. If you don't see markings or flags on the ground within your project area, follow up with 811. If the lines are not marked in the two-day initial waiting period, call back and wait four hours!

The One Call ticket is valid for 14 days and must be renewed on the 12th day if the project if the project will last take longer than 14 days. If a flag is moved or a mark is erased, do not try to locate it or replant the flag yourself. Call 811 and have them come back out and remark the line.

If you are removing trees around service lines or making repairs, you do not always have the luxury of time to call and then wait two days for utilities to be marked, especially when there is severe water loss or a family is shut out of their home. Advise the agent that you have an "Emergency" and need the project site located immediately. But only use this in a true emergency situation. Once the emergency is under control and you are aware that additional work is required, you will need to Call 811 for a normal ticket.

It is important that field contact information be provided, especially in the event of an emergency. Please provide the supervisor and/or foreman or crew chief's name and cell phone number so that the locator can communicate directly with them.

To speed up the process and help make sure the locates are in the right project area, please white line the the project. Locators are willing to meet you at the job location and review the project if needed. Several will prepare a meet sheet that can help document your needs.

Did you know it's the law? If you strike or damage an underground utility, and you didn't call 811 or wait two business days before digging, you could be fined by the Texas Railroad Commission (RRC) and have to pay for repairs of the utility line that you damaged. Fines for not having a One Call ticket can reach over \$6,000 and pipeline repair can be much more expensive.

Below are the common flag and paint colors used to mark underground utility lines:

Red	Electric, Power Lines, Cables, Conduit and Lighting Cable
Purple	Reclaimed Water, Irrigation & Slurry Lines
Yellow	Gas, Oil, Steam, Petroleum, or Gaseous Materials
Orange	Communication, Alarm, or Signal Lines, Cables or Conduit
Blue	Potable Water
Green	Sewers and Drain Lines
Pink	Temporary Survey Marking

If you hit a gas line or smell gas (which has a rotten egg odor), abandon the equipment, leave the area and call 911, 811 and the gas company emergency line, staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Do not cover the damage. Do not try to make repairs yourself. Do not try to move any equipment or operate any electrical devices including vehicles, phones, tablets or computers. Extinguish any cigarettes or other smoking devices. Keep everyone else out of the area and stay within a safe distance to answer questions when the emergency responders arrive.

If you smell gas in your home or business, do not operate any electrical devices such as light switches, garage doors, appliances or phones, computers or tablets. Extinguish any cigarettes or other smoking devices. Once outside and away from the area, call 911 and the gas company emergency line. Stay away until a first responder tells you it is safe to go back.

We want to keep you, your family and our communities safe. If you should have any questions, please contact your local utility provider or 811.

This information has been provided by your local Damage Prevention Council that is comprised of utility companies and excavators. Texas 811 sponsors Damage Prevention Councils across the state. To find out more information, please review www.dpcoftexas.org. It is a great forum to network, review projects and gain assistance. The meetings are free and several provide lunch. Simply, click on the council in your area and you will see the Damage Prevention Manager who will add you to the meeting and event invitations

Safe digging! Remember to call 811 so you don't have to call 911.

