

# 811 Consumer Fact Sheet



Know what's below.  
**811** before you dig.

## What is 811?

811 is the national number designated by the Federal Communications Commission to help protect homeowners and professional excavators from unintentionally hitting underground utility lines while working on digging projects – large and small.

## Why call 811?

**Every** digging project requires a call to 811. Hitting an underground utility line while digging can harm the environment, cause serious personal injuries, disrupt service to an entire neighborhood and potentially incur fines and repair costs.

## When should I call 811?\*

- Installing a rural mailbox
- Putting in a fence
- Planting trees or shrubbery
- Building a patio or deck
- Excavating a new garden area

\* These are a few common examples of when to call. You or your contractor should call at least two full working days before any digging project.

## How does 811 work?

- One easy phone call to 811, at least two full working days prior to digging, starts the process of getting your underground utility lines marked for free.
- When you call 811 from anywhere in the country, a representative from your local one-call center will answer your call. Local one call center representative will ask you for the location and description of your digging job, and will notify affected utility companies, who will then send a professional locator to the proposed dig site to mark the approximate location of your lines within a few days of your call.
- Once your underground lines have been marked, you will know the approximate location of your utility lines and can dig safely.
- Please visit [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com), in the “state specific” area of the website, for more information about the one call center in your area.

## What happens if I don't call?

- Approximately 170,000 underground utilities are damaged each year by digging.
- One out of every three incidents is caused by someone who did not call 811 before digging.
- Knowing approximately where underground utility lines are buried before each digging project helps to prevent these situations.