



April is National Safe Digging Month



- red**
electric
- yellow**
natural gas
- orange**
telecommunications
- blue**
water
- green**
sewage

Every April, communities across the United States observe National Safe Digging Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of calling 811 National Call Before You Dig before beginning any digging project. Whether the task involves installing fence posts, planting trees, repairing irrigation lines, or digging foundations, contacting 811 helps prevent damage to underground utilities and keeps workers safe.

Underground utility lines, including gas, electricity, water, communications, and fiber optic cables, are often located just inches below the surface. Accidentally striking one of these lines can lead to serious injuries, costly repairs, service outages, and even fatalities. According to safety organizations and utility providers, thousands of underground lines are damaged each year simply because someone began digging without first requesting a utility locate.

Why Calling 811 Matters

When a contractor, farmer, landscaper, or homeowner contacts 811 before digging, utility companies are notified to send trained locators to mark underground lines with paint or flags. These markings identify where utilities are buried so the digging crew can avoid them or use safe excavation methods near the lines.

Calling 811 is:

- Free
- Required in many states before excavation
- One of the simplest ways to prevent serious accidents

Most states request that the call be made at least two to three business days before digging to allow enough time for utilities to mark the site.

Safe Digging in Agricultural Operations

In agricultural settings, digging activities are common during fence installation, irrigation work, drainage improvements, equipment repair, or building construction. Because farms and agricultural businesses often cover large areas with buried service lines, the risk of striking utilities can be significant if proper precautions are not taken.

Agricultural workers should always remember:

- Never assume you know where underground lines are located.
- Utility lines may have shifted or been added over time.
- Always maintain a safe distance from marked utilities.
- Use hand tools instead of mechanized equipment when digging close to marked lines.

Steps for Safe Digging

Before starting any digging project, follow these simple steps:

1. Notify 811 at least a few days before digging.
2. Wait for utilities to mark the location of underground lines.
3. Confirm all utilities have responded.
4. Respect the markings and dig carefully near them.
5. If a line is struck or exposed, stop work and notify the utility immediately.

A Simple Call That Saves Lives

The first 2 people that confirm reading of this article by emailing our office (info@agritrust.biz) and mention *safety alert gift card* will win a \$20 gift card. National Safe Digging Month serves as a reminder that a simple phone call or online request to 811 can prevent injuries, property damage, and costly downtime. By making safe digging practices a routine part of every project, agricultural businesses and contractors can protect their workers, equipment, and communities.

Remember: Call 811 before you dig—every job, every time.