

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

Media Contact: Terrie Prosper, 415.703.1366, news@cpuc.ca.gov

**CPUC SUPPORTS NATIONAL 811 DAY WITH REMINDER
TO CALL 811 BEFORE DIGGING**

SAN FRANCISCO, August 2, 2012 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), in support of the efforts of the California Regional Common Ground Alliance, reminds all Californians that August 11 (811) is almost here and serves as a natural reminder to call 811 prior to any digging project in order to have the location of below ground utility owned pipelines or other structures located and marked.

Every year on August 11th stakeholders from all aspects of the excavating community, which includes utilities, regulators, excavation contractors, and companies that support damage prevention efforts year-round, make an extra effort to communicate to professionals and homeowners the importance of calling 811 to find out what's below before beginning any digging project. People doing work or projects that require digging into the ground – from those making holes for garden projects and fences to contractors digging up pavement – need to call 811 to know what's below before they begin digging in order to reduce the risk of striking an underground utility line. Adhering to this safe digging process helps prevent injuries, property damage, and outages.

When calling 811, professionals and homeowners are connected to their local one-call center, USA North or DigAlert, which notifies its member utility companies of the intent to dig. Within two business days (not including weekends and holidays) utilities will locate and mark, using flags or spray paint, the approximate location of their facilities that are within the work area designated by the caller. Otherwise, the utilities will provide notification that they have no facilities in that area. In the case of master-metered mobilehome parks, park management needs to provide the location of master-metered subsurface facilities.

Striking a single subsurface facility can cause injury, significant repair costs, fines, and inconvenient outages. Every excavation project, no matter how large or small, warrants a call to 811. Installing a mailbox, putting in a fence, building a deck, and laying a patio are all examples of excavation projects for which 811 should be called before starting. In the case of master-metered mobilehome parks, residents should call 811, and also notify park management, before excavating within the park.

The depth of utility lines can vary for a number of reasons, such as erosion, previous digging projects, and uneven surfaces. Utility lines need to be properly marked because even when digging only a few inches, the risk of striking an underground utility line still exists. Failure to call before excavating results in more than 250,000 unintentional hits annually.

Visit www.call811.com for more information about 811 and the call-before-you-dig process.

For more information on the CPUC, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov.

###