

California Public Utilities Commission
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

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CPUC REMINDS CALIFORNIANS TO CALL 811 BEFORE DIGGING

SAN FRANCISCO, August 9, 2011 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today reminded Californians to call 811 prior to any digging project in order to have underground utility lines marked.

“August 11th, or 8/11, is almost here, so this is a perfect time to remind people to be safe and call 811 prior to any digging project,” said CPUC Commissioner Timothy Alan Simon, who also serves as the Chair of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners Committee on Natural Gas. “Everyone from those digging small holes for lawn and garden projects to contractors digging up pavement need to call 811 to know what’s below before they start their project in order to eliminate the risk of striking an underground utility line.”

When calling 811, homeowners are connected to a local one-call center, which notifies the appropriate 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 designated work area. Otherwise, the utilities will provide notification that they have no facilities in that area.

Striking a single pipeline can cause injury, repair costs, fines, and inconvenient outages. Every digging 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 digging projects for which 811 should be called before starting.

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 digging 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.

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