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News

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Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration Urges Americans to Spread the Word About Calling 811 Before You Dig

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) is asking the public to call 811 before digging into any projects this spring and to share the safe digging message with friends and family.

“Calling 811 is simple, free and it can save your life,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. “We’re spreading the word with our message today, but we can’t do it alone. Everyone who receives this message should tell their friends and neighbors to ‘know what’s below’ before they dig this spring.”

Striking buried pipeline is a leading cause of pipeline-related death and injury and can lead to service outages in entire neighborhoods. Over the last 20 years, property damage costs equal more than \$530 million nationwide.

All of that can be avoided, by calling 811 a few days before digging. Once the call is made, a representative will come to your property and mark nearby underground utilities so that you’ll know what’s below and be able to dig safely.

DOT urges the general public to share the safe digging message throughout April by taking the following actions:

- Post the 811 [logo](#) and [National Safe Digging Month](#) button on websites and social media sites like Facebook and [Twitter](#)
- Share the [811 Public Service Announcement](#)
- Tweet about safe digging [#Call811B4UDig](#)
- Share [5 Headaches You’ll Avoid By Calling 811 Before You Dig](#)
- Visit your state’s [Pipeline Profile](#) to learn more about the pipelines in your community

“We want 811 to become as well-known as 911, because digging without getting your utilities marked is not only dangerous, it can also cut off services to an entire neighborhood and cost you money,” warns PHMSA Administrator Cynthia Quarterman. “The good news is that digging-related incidents can be prevented with a single call.”

Since the debut of the universal 811 hotline six years ago, the number of serious pipeline incidents from unsafe digging has decreased by more than 45 percent. PHMSA is working to continue the decline of digging-related incidents by providing additional safety tips this month.

The Common Ground Alliance, a pipeline safety partner, reports that approximately three in 10 homeowners plan to dig on their property this year for an outdoor home or property improvement project.

Visit PHMSA’s [Pipeline Safety Guide](#) for more information on safe digging practices and what to do if you detect a gas pipeline leak.

As the safety regulator for America’s 2.6 million-mile pipeline transportation system, PHMSA is stepping up other efforts under the Pipeline Safety Act of 2011, which was signed into law in January 2012. The Act provides the regulatory-certainty necessary for pipeline operators to plan infrastructure investments and create jobs, and strengthens PHMSA’s authority to hold operators more accountable. For more information on PHMSA’s progress, [visit the Pipeline Safety Act of 2011 page](#).

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration develops and enforces regulations for the safe, reliable, and environmentally sound operation of the nation's 2.6 million mile pipeline transportation system and the nearly 1 million daily shipments of hazardous materials by land, sea, and air. Please visit <http://phmsa.dot.gov> for more information.

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