



National Fuel Reminds the Public to Call Before You Dig

(Aug. 9, 2024) WILLIAMSVILLE, NY – In observance of **811 Day** on Aug. 11, National Fuel reminds homeowners and professional contractors to Call Before You Dig. Residents should call 811, a free service, at least two days before digging to have underground utility lines located and marked.

Before starting any construction, landscaping, gardening or outdoor improvement project this year, call 811, a toll-free national phone number or visit udignity.org. The national 811 phone number connects callers with local One Call Centers. Operators record the excavation locations and notify National Fuel and other underground utilities. National Fuel then dispatches professional locators to mark the approximate positioning of lines. It's a fast, easy way to be safe and protect those within the vicinity of the project. Once a site is professionally marked, it is safe to begin digging around the marked areas.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, calling 811 has proven to be the foremost preventive measure in excavation safety and damage prevention. Research has revealed that if someone calls 811 before they dig, they have a 99 percent chance of avoiding an incident, injury, repairs and fines, harm to the environment and even death.

Recently, the Common Ground Alliance (CGA), a national association representing the utility industry and committed to saving lives and preventing damage to underground infrastructure, announced results from a recent national survey which found 26.9 million homeowners planning do-it-yourself digging projects will not contact 811, putting themselves and communities at risk.

Respondents cited the belief that shallow digging does not require contacting 811 and unfamiliarity with the 811-notification process as top reasons they do not plan to get utilities marked before breaking ground on DIY digging projects.

“All excavation projects— even small or shallow digging projects like planting trees and shrubs, or installing a fence or mailbox require a call,” said Karen Merkel, spokesperson for National Fuel. “Many of the pipeline leaks we respond to each year occur when homeowners and businesses dig on properties without knowing the location of underground utility lines.”

Smell gas? Leave fast!

As always, if you smell gas, leave fast! If a rotten-egg natural gas odor is present, leave the premises immediately and call National Fuel's emergency line, 1-800-444-3130, from a different location. If you smell gas outdoors, leave the area immediately, call National Fuel's emergency number and provide the address nearest to the site of the odor. To learn more about natural gas safety, visit www.nationalfuel.com/utility/gas-safety/.

National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation is the Utility segment of National Fuel Gas Company, a diversified energy company that is engaged in a number of natural gas-related activities. The Utility provides natural gas service for approximately 2.1 million residents in Western New York and Northwestern Pennsylvania. For more information, visit www.nationalfuel.com.

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