

For Immediate Release

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NARUC
National Association of Regulatory
Utility Commissioners

April is Safe Digging Month: NARUC and State Regulators Remind You to Call 811 Before Digging at Home or Work

WASHINGTON (April 1, 2024) — The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners reminds citizens during Safe Digging Month to avoid accidents and utility interruptions when engaging in any outdoor projects by calling 811.

A recent national survey released by the Common Ground Alliance, sponsor of Safe Digging Month, shows that more than half of U.S. homeowners plan to complete an outdoor do-it-yourself project that involves digging in the next year, but 26.9 million Americans do not plan to notify 811 ahead of their next project, putting themselves and their communities at risk by not contacting 811 before digging.

“Because state utility regulators and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration have authority over miles of underground pipe, we cannot stress enough the importance of following safety measures before digging underground,” said NARUC Committee on Gas Chair and Nevada Commissioner Tammy Cordova. “The spring season inevitably brings with it an increase in outdoor projects that can result in hitting buried utility lines. NARUC and state regulators strongly urge anyone undertaking outdoor residential or business projects to call 811 beforehand. The costs of striking and damaging underground gas, electric, communications, water and sewer lines reach billions of dollars annually. A simple call can help prevent these issues and avoid serious health risks.”

According to CGA, when asked why homeowners aren’t planning to call 811, the top reasons are related to beliefs around shallow digging and unfamiliarity with the 811 notification process. Even small projects like planting a garden or installing a mailbox or post light require homeowners to contact 811 because many utilities are buried just a few inches below ground.

Hitting buried utility lines can be avoided by reaching out to the 811 One–Call service, available in every state, several days in advance of beginning any excavation or digging project, including small yard projects. NARUC and its members — state public service commissions — will continue to raise awareness on the need for safe digging practices throughout the month of April.

Information on each state’s safe digging program and contacts are available at bit.ly/SafeDiggingMap.

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About NARUC

NARUC is a non-profit organization founded in 1889 whose members include the governmental agencies that are engaged in the regulation of utilities and carriers in the fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. NARUC's member agencies regulate telecommunications, energy, and water utilities. NARUC represents the interests of state public utility commissions before the three branches of the federal government.