



California Public Utilities Commission
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

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CPUC SUPPORTS NATIONAL SAFE DIGGING MONTH AND REMINDS CALIFORNIANS TO CALL 811 BEFORE DIGGING

SAN FRANCISCO, April 2, 2013 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), in support of April as the National Safe Digging Month, today reminded Californians to call 811 prior to any digging project in order to have underground utility lines marked.

The month of April is once again National Safe Digging Month, the time of year when industry stakeholders come together to communicate how important it is that professionals and homeowners alike call 811 and follow the safe digging process to help prevent injuries, property damage, and outages. The CPUC also reminds residents within master-metered mobilehome parks to notify park management of all intended excavation activities by residents or a contractor performing excavation work on behalf of a resident.

It is important that people doing work or projects that require digging into the ground – from those making small holes for lawn and garden projects to contractors digging up pavement – call 811 to know what’s below before they begin digging in order to eliminate the risk of striking an underground utility line and injuring themselves, their families, or neighbors.

When calling 811, professionals and homeowners are connected to a local one-call center, 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 designated work area. 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 result in significant injuries or damages to the excavator and the nearby public, fines, and inconvenient outages. Care should always be taken, including only using hand tools when digging in the proximity of marked facilities. 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. Marks provided by utilities do not provide depth of facilities, nor should depth ever be assumed. Failure to call before excavating results in more than 250,000 unintentional hits annually.

California's requirements related to excavation notifications are contained in Government Code Section 4216.

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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