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## Talking Points

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### Safe Digging

#### About 811:

- 811 is the national “Call Before You Dig” phone number. It was created to help prevent people from coming into contact with underground utility lines during digging projects.
- The first step in safe digging is to call 811, so before ever starting any digging project, make sure to call 811.
- Always call a few days before a digging project. It takes a few business days for a professional to come mark your utilities with flags and/or spray paint.
- Make sure to tell the operator where you plan to dig and what type of work you will be doing. The 811 operator will route you to a local utility locating service.
- After calling 811, a professional will then be sent to your digging location to mark the areas where public utility lines are buried, free of charge.

#### What utilities are buried underground:

- Electricity is not the only utility that can be located underground. Gas, water, sewer, communications, and telephone lines can also be buried beneath the earth. When located the following utilities are marked with the following colors:
  - Red – Electric
  - Orange – Communications, Telephone/CATV
  - Blue – Potable Water
  - Green – Sewer/Drainage
  - Yellow – Gas/Petroleum Pipe Line
  - Purple – Reclaimed Water
  - White – Pre-mark site where digging/excavation is planned

#### For homeowners and contractors:

- Even if you previously had utilities located by calling 811, it is best to call before every digging project. Underground utilities can shift, and it is important to be certain of where they are before ever putting a shovel in the ground.
- Make sure all utilities are marked before beginning a digging project and that you are wearing all the proper protective gear.
- There is no project too small or task too menial that you don't have to take the proper precautions before a digging project.
- Remember, other people and businesses may also rely these utilities buried in the yard.
- Always respect the utility markings, and dig with care.
- If you accidentally come in contact with an underground utility, do not bury the problem. Your first priority should be evacuating the area for safety. It can be difficult to locate exactly where a problem is after the damage occurred and was buried. Damage to some underground utilities can cause dangers and inconveniences miles away from the actual site of the damage.
- Small nicks in underground wires can be expensive, but necessary, to fix. If you nick an underground utility, notify your utility provider. Do not attempt to fix the problem yourself.

#### Private Utilities:

- 811 locators do not locate privately installed facilities. To find those, you will need to hire a private locator.
- Some examples of private facilities are:
  - Gas piping to a garage or out building
  - Gas grills and pool heaters
  - Private water systems
  - Underground sprinkler systems
  - Customer owned electric lines
  - Invisible fences
  - Data communication systems
- If you do not know what facilities are on the property, look for clues to tell you what might be under ground, like: a propane storage tank, gas meters, a detached garage or outbuilding with lights, a grill or pool on the property, manhole lids, storm drains, and pavement patches.
- If you have called 811 to have facilities located but suspect that there are additional buried facilities where you need to dig, do not put a shovel in the ground until you get a private contractor to locate the lines.

*The Energy Education Council is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to promoting electrical safety and energy efficiency. Established in 1952, the Council serves as a forum for diverse utility and energy organizations to collaborate on the mutually vital issues of efficiency and safety. Learn more at:*