



ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION

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April is “Safe Digging Month”

Commission Urges Arizonans to Call 811 Before Starting Projects

PHOENIX, AZ—The Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) is joining with Arizona Blue Stake and the Common Ground Alliance to designate April 2009 as National Safe Digging Month. This month is dedicated to increasing awareness of safe digging practices and the Commission encourages homeowners and contractors to call 811 before they dig to prevent injuries, property damage and inconvenient outages.

Our land contains a complex underground infrastructure of pipelines, wires and cables and many people don't realize that utility lines are buried only a few inches underground, making them easy to strike even during shallow digging projects. Striking an underground utility line while digging can cause harm to you or those around you, disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, and could potentially result in fines and repair costs. More than 256,000 underground utility lines are struck each year in the U.S. Nationwide, 35% of all digging damages result from not calling before digging.

A call must be placed to 811 before every digging project, from simple landscaping projects like planting trees or shrubs, to building a deck or installing a mailbox.

Here's how it works:

- One free, simple phone call to 811 (or 1-800-STAKE-IT) makes it easy for Arizona Blue Stake to notify all appropriate utility companies of your intent to dig.
- Call at least 2 working days prior to digging to ensure enough time for utility lines to be marked or cleared with a response.
- When you call 811, a representative from Arizona Blue Stake will ask for the location and description of your digging project.
- Arizona Blue Stake will notify affected utility companies, who will then send a professional locator to the proposed dig site to mark the approximate location of the underground lines.
- Once lines have been completely marked or cleared with a response, roll up those sleeves and carefully dig around the marked areas.

The Corporation Commission's Pipeline Safety Division enforces pipeline safety standards and operating practices applicable to the transportation of gas and hazardous liquids by pipeline and the operation of liquefied natural gas facilities. Inspections are conducted on all interstate gas transmission and interstate hazardous liquid pipeline facilities.

The Pipeline Safety Section also enforces the Arizona Underground Facilities Law, otherwise known as the “Blue Stake” Law. Last year, Pipeline Safety staff participated in 20 Blue Stake seminars held state-wide with attendance of nearly 2,000.

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