

# 811 Media Fact Sheet



Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.



## What is 811?

811 is the national number designated by the Federal Communications Commission to help protect do-it-yourselfers, landscapers and contractors from unintentionally hitting underground utility lines while working on digging projects – large and small.

## Why call 811?

**Every** digging project requires a call to 811. Hitting an underground utility line while digging can harm the environment, cause serious personal injuries, disrupt service to an entire neighborhood and potentially incur fines and repair costs.

## When should people call 811?\*

- Installing a rural mailbox
- Putting in a fence
- Planting trees or shrubbery
- Building a deck or patio
- Excavating a new garden area

\* These are a few common examples of when to call. Do-it-yourselfers and contractors should call at least three full business days before any digging project.

## How does 811 work?

- One easy phone call to 811, at least three full business days prior to digging, starts the process of getting underground utility lines marked for free.
- When calling 811 from anywhere in the country, a representative from the appropriate local one-call center will answer the call to find out the location and description of the digging site and will notify affected utility companies, who will then send a professional locator to identify and mark the approximate location of lines within a few days of the call.
- Once underground lines have been marked, callers will know the approximate location of utility lines and can dig safely.
- Please visit [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com), in the “state specific” area of the website, for more information about the 62 local one call centers across the country.
- Visit [www.sc811.com](http://www.sc811.com) for information about safe digging practices in South Carolina.

## What happens if people don't call?

- Every six minutes an underground utility line is damaged because someone decided to dig without first calling 811.
- Knowing approximately where underground utility lines are buried before each digging project helps to prevent these situations.

## Who is behind 811?

The Common Ground Alliance (CGA) is the leading association created specifically to work with all industry stakeholders in an effort to prevent damage to underground utility infrastructure and ensure public safety and environmental protection. Officially formed in 2000, CGA represents a continuation of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Common Ground Study. The CGA works with its 1,500 members and sponsors to promote the national 811, “Call Before You Dig” campaign. For more information, visit [www.commongroundalliance.com](http://www.commongroundalliance.com).