

NEWS RELEASE

INDIANA UTILITY REGULATORY COMMISSION (IURC)

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IURC Expands “Call Before You Dig” Training with Grants to Cities, Towns, and Counties

Safe Dig Indiana | Local Grant aims to connect local government employees to funding for underground utility safety training

INDIANAPOLIS – The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC or Commission) today expanded its Safe Dig Indiana training to include a new grant for local government employees to attend training and education programs involving underground utility safety practices. The Safe Dig Indiana | Local Grant is intended to help ensure local governments can affordably provide quality training to their employees and, through education, facilitate engagement of local governments in broader regional and statewide underground facility safety networks.

Eligible grantees include, but are not limited to, employees of local government entities, such as cities, towns, and counties, including representatives from municipally owned utilities.

“Whether involved in excavation, planning, designing, permitting, or emergency response services, local governments play a key role in the safety of their communities,” said IURC Chairman Jim Atterholt. “The goal of this funding is to allow local governments around the state a chance to offer these important training and education opportunities to their employees without having to consider the financial burden. This grant serves as one way the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission is working to achieve one of the pillars communicated by Governor Eric Holcomb to deliver great government service to taxpayers.”

More information about the grant, including a list of approved training and education programs, can be found at www.SafeDigIndiana.com.

To receive a grant and before completing the online application, local government employees must first successfully complete the IURC’s free online training courses on safe digging practices, found at www.SafeDigIndiana.com. The training, which was launched in August, includes two online safety training courses: “Indiana Dig Law”, which outlines the basics of the Indiana Dig Law, what to do if a jobsite isn’t marked, and the consequences of failing to dig safely; and “811 System”, which explains what the 811 system is and how to use it most efficiently to save time and prevent excavation delays.

Funds for the training system were allocated from the Underground Plant Protection Account (UPPA), which itself is funded through the penalties assessed to excavators and gas line operators

who violate Indiana’s “Call Before You Dig” law. Per Indiana Code § 8-1-26-24, funds from UPPA may only be allocated to improve the safety of Indiana’s underground plant resources through:

- Public awareness programs concerning underground plant protection;
- Training and educational programs for contractors, excavators, locators, operators, and other persons involved in underground plant protection; and
- Incentive programs for contractors, excavators, locators, operators, and other persons involved in underground plant protection to reduce the number of violations

More information about the UPPA can be found [here](#), and more information about Indiana’s “Call Before You Dig” law can be found [here](#).

Underground utilities may carry explosive gases, powerful electrical charges, critical data from hospitals and emergency service providers, high pressure water, and other products that, if damaged during excavation activities, can have serious, and in some cases, deadly consequences. Protecting these resources by properly training those who work near them protects the public and the excavator from serious injury or even death. Damages to utility lines are prevalent across the country – each year in Indiana alone, more than 2,100 natural gas lines are damaged.

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The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (Commission) is a fact-finding body that hears evidence in cases filed before it and makes decisions based on the evidence presented in those cases. An advocate of neither the public nor the utilities, the Commission is required by state statute to make decisions that balance the interests of all parties to ensure the utilities provide safe and reliable service at just and reasonable rates. The Commission also serves as a resource to the legislature, executive branch, state agencies, and the public by providing information regarding Indiana’s utilities and the regulatory process. In addition, Commission members and staff are actively involved with regional, national, and federal organizations regarding utilities issues affecting Indiana. For more information, please visit www.in.gov/iurc.