

NEWS RELEASE

Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

IURC Marks National "811 Day" By Launching Safe Digging Training

Free online training for excavators focuses on "Call Before You Dig" law and the 811 system

INDIANAPOLIS (August 11, 2017) — The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC or Commission) today launched the first phase of its new, online safety training system for professionals who work in excavation, including, but not limited to, landscapers, plumbers, concrete workers, and heavy construction workers. The free training courses can be accessed at www.SafeDigIndiana.com and are open to any individual wanting to learn more about how the "Call Before You Dig" law and 811 system affects them.

"Having well-trained professionals who understand the Indiana Dig Law and how it applies to them is critical," said IURC Chairman Jim Atterholt. "These safety trainings were created through the Commission's Underground Plant Protection Account, and our goal is that they be used as an additional resource by excavators all across our state to increase awareness of Indiana's 'Call Before You Dig' law and 811 system."

Two training courses were launched today, with more scheduled to be released in the coming months. Topics currently available include "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.

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.

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](#).

National 811 Day is observed each year on August 11th to serve as a reminder of the importance of safe digging practices. More information about Indiana 811 can be found [here](#).

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About the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission

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 utility issues affecting Indiana. For more information, please visit www.in.gov/iurc.

Media Contact: Stephanie Hodgin, (317) 233-4723, stehodgin@urc.in.gov