

NEWS RELEASE

INDIANA UTILITY REGULATORY COMMISSION (IURC)

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IURC Hosting Free Safe Dig Events as Dig Season Begins

Safety Training to be Held in 7 Communities Across Indiana in March and April

INDIANAPOLIS – The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC or Commission) today announced it will host seven underground utility Safety Days across Indiana this spring. Safety Days are designed to educate participants on the “Call Before You Dig” law and 811 system and will include both classroom-style segments and a live, mock gas line-strike demonstration with emergency response to show the dangers of a gas line damage. The third annual Safety Days, which are aimed at those involved in utility safety, including excavators, utility employees, locators, and emergency response professionals, will be held in the following communities this year: Columbus, Evansville, Fort Wayne, Lafayette, Noblesville, Scottsburg, and Valparaiso.

“The 2018 Safety Days offer an opportunity for excavators, utility employees, locators, and others to attend a class and live demonstration right in their own community,” said Interim Chairman Jim Huston. “These free Safety Days, paired with our free online Safe Dig Indiana training, provide valuable resources to help ensure those digging around Indiana’s critical utilities are better trained and better understand their responsibilities as it relates to the law and the 811 system.”

More information about the events, including the link to register, specific locations, and general agenda for each day, can be found at www.IndianaSafetyDay.com.

Those who are unable to attend or would like more information about the “Call Before You Dig” law can visit www.SafeDigIndiana.com to access the Commission’s free, online safety training system for professionals who work in excavation, including, but not limited to, landscapers, plumbers, concrete workers, and heavy construction workers. The training courses are open to any individual wanting to learn more about how the “Call Before You Dig” law and 811 system affects them. The Commission launched this first phase of training courses on national “811 Day” last year, and more courses are scheduled to be released in the coming months.

Funds for the Safety Days and online 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.