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## **New Survey Reveals Many Americans Will Compromise Their Safety During Spring Digging Projects**

*Indiana 811 reminds homeowners to call 811 before digging to avoid underground utilities and potential injury*

**GREENWOOD, Ind. (April 1, 2010)** – Indiana 811 today announced results from a recent survey that found more than half (57 percent) of Americans who plan to dig on their property this year do not plan to notify their local call-before-you-dig center by dialing 811. Digging without knowing the approximate location of underground utilities can cause serious injuries, service disruptions and repair costs if a line is damaged.

Everyone who calls Indiana 811 two full working days before digging will be connected to a customer service representative, who will take the caller's information and communicate it to local utility companies. A professional locator will then visit the dig site to mark the approximate location of underground utility lines with spray paint or flags. Once a site has been accurately marked, it is safe to begin digging around the marked areas.

The national public opinion survey of 749 homeowners, conducted between March 11-16, found 52 percent of homeowner households plan to do at least one do-it-yourself project that involves digging this year, up from a reported 44 percent in 2009.

Among homeowners who plan to dig this year, the most popular projects include planting shrubs (71 percent), planting a tree (57 percent) and digging to pour concrete to create a patio or walkway (29 percent). All of these common do-it-yourself (DIY) projects could damage the underground infrastructure if the person digging does not know the approximate location of buried utility lines.

Failure to call before digging contributed to an estimated 75,000 underground utility damages in 2008, according to industry data compiled by the Common Ground Alliance (CGA), the international organization dedicated to protecting underground utility lines and the safety of people who dig near them.

The survey also found that homeowners who plan to dig this year have a history of engaging in other DIY safety habits, which Indiana 811 hopes is a positive sign that state residents will be more likely to add calling 811 two full working days before digging to their project checklists.

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Specifically, homeowners who plan to dig this year reported doing the following in the past during a DIY project:

- 95 percent have worn gloves.
- 86 percent have worn proper footwear when mowing the lawn.
- 81 percent have turned off the electricity during minor repairs.
- 76 percent have worn protective eyewear.
- 74 percent have had someone secure the base of a ladder for them.
- 58 percent have worn a protective mask.

Gov. Mitch Daniels has proclaimed April as Safe Digging Month to remind residents to always contact Indiana 811 before digging. Additionally, the U.S. Senate recently passed a resolution proclaiming April as National Safe Digging Month.

Indiana 811 and its member utilities plan to increase their public outreach across the state during the month, including partnerships with Earth Day and Arbor Day events, as well as lawn and garden centers.

“The fact that many homeowners who plan to dig this year don’t think their projects require calling 811 is a major problem, especially when you consider that these are people who are mindful of safety in other ways when they do their own projects,” said Dan Meiners, Executive Director for Indiana 811. “This illustrates the need for a Safe Digging Month and serves as a reminder to area residents that potential dangers that are out of sight shouldn’t also be out of mind.”

As part of Safe Digging Month, Indiana 811 encourages homeowners to take the following steps when planning a digging project this spring:

- Always call 811 two full working days before digging, regardless of the depth or familiarity with the property.
- Learn what the various colors of paint and flags represent at [www.call811.com/faqs](http://www.call811.com/faqs).
- Consider moving the location of your project if it is near utility line markings.
- If another location is not viable, respect the marks and avoid using mechanized digging equipment near them.
- If a contractor has been hired, confirm that a call to 811 has been made. Don’t allow work to begin if the lines aren’t marked.

### **About Indiana 811**

Indiana 811 is a one-call notification center that notifies member utility owners of a contractor’s or homeowner’s proposed excavation plans. Anyone who is planning to dig must contact Indiana 811 at least two full working days prior to any digging. In turn, Indiana 811 arranges for member utility operators to have the underground lines at the project site marked so that workers and homeowners can carefully excavate around them and protect the lines. For more information about Indiana 811, including a list of its 948 member utilities, please visit [www.indiana811.org](http://www.indiana811.org).

### **About the study**

International Communications Research (ICR) conducted a national omnibus phone study on behalf of Common Ground Alliance between March 11 and 16, 2010. A total of 749 American homeowners ages 18+ were asked for their opinions on home and property improvement project topics. The survey had a margin of error that varied from +-2.2 percent to +-5.7 percent, depending on the particular survey question.