



# Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission

## News Release

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## GOV. PENCE PROCLAIMS APRIL AS INDIANA SAFE DIGGING MONTH

*Hoosiers encouraged to always call 811 before digging*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 1, 2014

**INDIANAPOLIS-** Today, Governor Pence proclaimed April Safe Digging Month, reminding Indiana residents to always call 811 two working days before starting any digging project. National Safe Digging Month is formally recognized by the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate and has traditionally earned the support from nearly every state governor across the country.

Every six minutes an underground utility line is damaged because someone decided to dig without first calling 811. Striking just a single line can cause injury, repair costs, fines, and inconvenient outages, as well as fires and explosions. Every digging project, no matter how large or small, requires a call to 811. Installing a mailbox, building a deck, or planting a tree are all examples of digging projects where a call to 811 is necessary at least two working days prior. If a call is not made and a gas line is hit, the individual or entity conducting the digging could be liable.

In Indiana, the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission's (IURC) Pipeline Safety Division is charged with investigating alleged violations of Indiana's Damage to Underground Facilities Law and reporting its findings to the Underground Plant Protection Advisory Committee for penalty recommendations.

"As April marks the traditional start of digging season, we are using this month to strongly encourage individuals and companies to call 811 before they begin digging," said Jim Atterholt, Chairman of the IURC. "Since the tragic San Bruno, California explosion in 2010, the IURC has strengthened its enforcement actions and penalties with regard to non-compliance of safe digging practices."

When calling 811, homeowners and contractors are connected to a 24-hour call center, which notifies the appropriate utility companies of their intent to dig. Professional locators are then sent to the requested digging site to mark the approximate locations of public underground lines with flags, paint, or both, all free of charge. Once utility lines are located, digging work must be completed within 20 days.

The depth of utility lines can vary for a number of reasons, such as erosion, previous digging projects, and uneven surfaces. Utility lines need to be properly marked because, even when digging only a few inches, the risk of striking an underground utility line still exists.

For more information about digging safely, please visit [www.in.gov/iurc](http://www.in.gov/iurc) or [www.indiana811.org](http://www.indiana811.org).

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The 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 IURC is required by state statute to make decisions that balance the interests of all parties to ensure the utilities provide adequate and reliable service at reasonable prices.