

Governor Pence Reminds Hoosiers to Stay Safe

INDIANAPOLIS (April 13, 2015) – With spring season here, it’s important to know that Hoosiers face an increased risk of injury and even death while on construction jobsites or performing projects at home.

Whether a project takes place in the yard or on the street, there are important steps residents should take to keep themselves and those around them safe. To be safe this season, Hoosiers should practice safe digging, pay attention in work zones, give construction workers space, and slow down and avoid distractions on the road.

“Safety should always be a priority and now is a great time to remind ourselves of the steps we can take to keep Indiana residents and employees safe,” said Governor Mike Pence.

Practice Safe Digging

The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) and the Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) remind Hoosiers to make a free call to Indiana 811 at least two full working days prior to a scheduled digging project. This will allow utility locators to visit the proposed excavation site and mark the approximate location of buried utility lines. Every six minutes, a buried utility line is damaged because someone decided to dig without first calling 811. This risky behavior can result in inconvenient outages, costly repairs, personal injury, and even death. Remember that over time, erosion, and root structure growth can shift the locations of utility lines so a call to 811 before every project is important. If work is planned in a public right of way, contact the appropriate state or local agency to obtain a permit prior to starting the project.

Give Roadside Workers Space

Hardworking Hoosiers are on job sites throughout the state, working to build, repair, and replace infrastructure and architecture. Indiana law requires drivers to move over or slow down when encountering stopped utility, emergency or highway vehicles at work. Drivers should change lanes away from a vehicle with flashing lights, if they can do so safely. If not, motorists should reduce their speed 10 mph under the posted limit and proceed with caution. Drivers should not stop in the roadway unless directed, as this may cause a secondary incident. We all play an important part in helping our fellow Hoosiers get home from work safely. Make sure to Plan ahead and allow extra time when traveling through work zones.

Slow Down and Avoid Distractions

Work zones leave no room for distractions and require attentive, cautious driving habits. Do not use cell phones while driving, especially in a work zone. Several studies show drivers using a phone are four times more likely to be in a crash. Other distractions, anything other than driving, can be just as dangerous. Motorists face fines of up to \$1,000 for speeding, up to \$5,000 for driving recklessly or aggressively, and up to \$10,000 and/or a prison sentence of up to eight years for injuring or killing a worker. These fines are used to fund additional Indiana State Police work zone patrols.

Both at home and away, Hoosiers should keep safety top of mind. Together, we can keep our homes, streets, and each other safe.

About the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC)

The IURC 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 safe and reliable service at just and reasonable rates. For more information, please visit www.in.gov/iurc.

The IURC’s Pipeline Safety Division is responsible for investigating alleged violations of Indiana’s Damage to Underground Facilities law. The Division reports its findings to the Underground Plant Protection Advisory Committee which is comprised of various stakeholders appointed by the Governor. The Advisory Committee reviews the Division’s findings and provides the IURC with its recommendations regarding appropriate fines and penalties. For more information about this advisory committee, visit www.in.gov/iurc/2654.htm.

About the Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC)

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor represents Indiana consumer interests before state and federal commissions that regulate utilities. As a state agency, the OUCC's mission is to represent all Indiana consumers to ensure quality, reliable utility services at the most reasonable prices possible through dedicated advocacy, consumer education, and creative problem solving. For more information, please visit www.in.gov/oucc.

About Indiana 811

811 is the FCC-designated national three-digit number created to eliminate the confusion of multiple "Call Before You Dig" numbers across the country. The quick and efficient one call service will notify the subscribing local utilities, which then send locating technicians to the requested site to mark the approximate locations of underground lines. The call is free of charge in Indiana and is available 24/7.

About the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)

INDOT is responsible for construction and maintenance of state roads, interstates and U. S. routes including adjacent overpasses and ramps. Local cities, counties and towns are responsible for other roadways. INDOT has six district offices across the state that handle day-to-day operations including construction, detours, traffic signals, signs, permits and maintenance operations. Find your local INDOT district at dotmaps.indot.in.gov/apps/districtmaps/

About the Indiana Department of Labor (IDOL)

The mission of the Indiana Department of Labor is to advance the safety, health and prosperity of Hoosiers in the workplace. In order to make significant strides, we emphasize both enforcement and compliance assistance by employers. www.in.gov/dol

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