

Safe digging is everyone's responsibility...

It's Smart.
It's Free.
It's the Law.



3 Ways to Contact 811

1. Telephone

Dial 811 or 800-292-8525 outside of Alabama

2. Web

At www.al811.com using our Web Portal

3. Mobile App

Free download available for iPhone and Android



Available on



Know what's below. 811 before you dig.

A GUIDE FOR SAFE DIGGING



www.al811.com

811 before you dig

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IT'S FREE & IT'S THE LAW

Contacting Alabama 811 either by dialing 811 (800-292-8525 outside Alabama), going online through our web portal link at www.al811.com or by downloading the Alabama 811 mobile app will notify member utility owners to mark their facilities prior to the start of your project. This simple process protects you from injury, protects your community from potential outages, hazards and saves on costly repairs. Notifying the facility owners by using 811 is a **FREE** service.

Proper Notification Procedures

1. Contact 811 before you dig.

Whether you are a contractor, home or property owner, builder, landscape service, fence contractor or anyone digging into the ground's surface, Alabama's Underground Damage Prevention Law requires that you give a two (2) full working days notice to Alabama 811, not counting the day of your notification, prior to all excavation activities.

Once your locate request has been processed by Alabama 811, you will be given a locate request



“ticket” number and provided a list of member utility companies who have facilities in the general area of your project that will be notified by Alabama 811 of your intention to begin excavation work. The member utility company will determine if their facilities are in direct conflict with your project. **A locate request ticket is valid for 20 working days.** Be sure to update your locate request ticket by the 17th day prior to its expiration date if your work will continue past the initial 20 working day period. This will keep a valid locate request active during excavation activities. Keep a record of the locate request number assigned to your job site and the utilities being notified.

2. Wait the Required Time


Alabama 811 member facility operators have **two full working days, not counting the day of notification prior to the proposed date of excavation, to mark their underground facilities.**


If all of the utility companies have not located their buried lines, Alabama 811 suggests that you initiate a second call back to the call center to state that all facilities appear not to be marked.


Please note that Alabama 811 does not perform the actual locating and marking of facilities. The underground facility operators or their representatives locate and mark the approximate location of their underground facility with their respective APWA color code marks. You can check the status of your locate requests via the Locate Request Search option on our website for those members who participate in the voluntary positive response program. Just enter your locate request number and a copy of your request will be displayed noting on the bottom those members who have responded as to the status of their marking.


3. Respect the Marks


The underground facilities at your project site will be identified by color coded paint, stakes or flags. Once the markings are placed, it is important that no one remove them until the project is complete.


**Red** - Electric


**Yellow** - Gas, oil or petroleum


**Orange** - Communications

**Blue** - Potable water

**Purple** - Reclaimed water, irrigation

**Green** - Sewer

**White** - Proposed excavation

**Pink** - Temporary survey

Important Reminders:

The depth of buried utility lines is not guaranteed. Be aware that there are utility lines found only a few inches under the ground’s surface. More than likely the lines were originally buried at a prescribed depth, though over a period of time soil erosion or grading operations may have altered the original depth of the facility. Never assume that a facility is the same depth throughout the route where you have exposed it by using hand tools or other non-invasive methods.

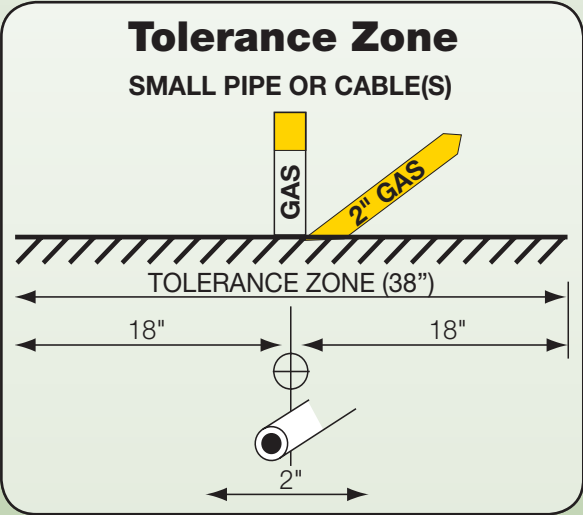
White is the designated color for Proposed Excavation. Pre-marking, also known as white-lining, your intended excavation area with white paint or flagging when applicable can improve the speed and accuracy of your locate request and is an aide in preventing damage to buried facilities.

4. Dig Safely and With Care

How do I know where it is safe to dig? Alabama Law defines a Tolerance Zone, also known as a Safety Zone as: “The width of the underground facility plus 18 inches on either side of the outside edge of the underground facility and color coded

markings on a horizontal plane and has established that anyone digging must follow guidelines to avoid any damage to buried facilities when working in the 18” Tolerance Zone area;

- To determine the exact location of the marked facilities utilize non-invasive methods and never mechanized equipment. Safe and acceptable methods can be accomplished by using hand tools, potholing, or vacuum excavation techniques. When paralleling the underground facility, the existing facility should be exposed at intervals as often as necessary to avoid damages.
- Once you have located the exact location of the buried utilities ALWAYS maintain a clearance of at least 18 inches between the underground facility and the known cutting edge or point of any mechanized equipment.
- Provide support of the underground facilities in and near the construction area, including backfill operations, which may be reasonably required by the facility owner to protect the underground facility from any damage.
- Protect and preserve the markings of the approximate location until markings are no longer required for safe excavation or demolition practices.



What happens if I don’t contact 811 before I dig? Alabama’s Underground Damage Prevention Law requires a locate request to Alabama 811 for mechanized equipment digging projects. **Alabama 811 suggests you have facilities located for ALL digging projects.** If you don’t find out where it’s safe to dig, it’s quite possible that you could damage a buried utility and potentially create a life-threatening situation. Additionally, civil penalties and fines may or will apply to violating this law.

Damaging a telephone or fiber optic line may not only cause an inconvenience by losing phone service, but it could deprive the community of emergency assistance. This could also make it impossible for police officers to get the information they need to keep themselves and your community safe.

Damaging a water or sewer line could threaten the safety of the public and environment. Striking a high-pressure water main can be dangerous and result in the loss of water to the surrounding neighborhoods. Damage to a sewer line could contaminate ground water and have other environmental impacts.

Damaging gas lines could result in serious personal injury and property damage if escaping gas ignites and possibly result in a community evacuation.

Damaging an electric line could cause a shock, major burns or electrocution.

What do I do if I damage the underground facility? The underground facility can be damaged by any piece of equipment used for digging even something as simple as a shovel can gouge, scrape, dent or crease the casing that surrounds a buried utility line. While this type of damage usually does not cause immediate harm, it may lead to a future break or leak as the protective coating erodes. If this should happen DO NOT cover up the line with dirt. Stop digging. Contact the utility owner so they can repair the damage and Alabama 811. It could prevent future service interruptions and personal injury. **If the damage creates a situation that threatens life or property, or there are escaping fumes or gas, call 911 immediately.**

Note to homeowners:

If you’re beginning a home improvement project that requires digging or adjusting the grade of your property, always contact Alabama 811 before beginning your work.

It may be quite surprising, but damage to buried utility lines can occur when doing typical home improvement projects such as putting up a fence, mailbox post, swing set or clothesline pole; building a deck or room addition; planting a garden, trees or shrubbery.

Because some underground facilities are customer owned, there may be some instances when a utility company may not locate your property. Service lines extending from the property easement to the house belong to the homeowner are considered private property and may not be marked on your property. You or a private contractor will be responsible for locating those private service lines

Examples of customer owned lines can include: water and sewer laterals (those running from the meter to your house), gas grills line, invisible fencing, electric service to your garage, irrigation systems, lines for outside lighting, or any other private services not owned by the utility company in your area.

Visit <http://www.al811.com/homeowners/> for additional safe digging practices.