

STATE OF NEW YORK

Public Service Commission

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April is "Dig Safely Month" in New York State

— Excavators, Contractors and Homeowners Can Call 811 Before Digging —

Albany, NY—3/30/09—The New York State Public Service Commission today announced that Governor David A. Paterson has proclaimed April 2009, to be "Dig Safely Month" in New York State as a way to remind excavators, contractors and homeowners that state law requires them to call one of the state's toll-free one-call centers before starting any excavation or digging project.

"I want to thank the Governor for his effort to raise awareness of the state's One-Call Notification System and the critical role it plays in identifying the location of underground infrastructure facilities," said Public Service Commission Chairman Garry Brown. "Damages to utility facilities caused during excavation can result in loss of utility service, personal injury and property damage. I urge all New Yorkers to do their part in protecting our vital infrastructure by simply dialing 811 before digging."

New York State established the One-Call Notification System as a fast, easy and comprehensive way to ensure underground facilities are properly marked before a digging or excavation project begins. The keys to preventing damage to underground facilities are the two "One-Call Notification Systems" that serve as communication links between contractors/excavators and local utilities/municipalities.

Under the Commission's "Call Before You Dig" regulations, adopted to protect the public's safety and general welfare, the following procedures are **REQUIRED**:

- Advance Notification Requirement. At least 2 to 10 working days prior to **any** mechanized work (does not include the date of the call) notice must be provided to the One-Call Notification System, which will transmit the project information to involved members so that they can mark the location of any facilities at the excavation site.
- How is notification made? For excavation on Long Island and the five boroughs of New York City, the New York City & Long Island One-Call Center must be called at 1-800-

272-4480. For excavation elsewhere in New York State, Dig Safely New York must be called at 1-800-962-7962. Notification for excavation work anywhere in the state can be made by dialing 811. Whether dialing the 1-800 number or 811, there is no charge for the call.

- What does excavation include? Excavation is defined in state law as "...movement or removal of earth, rock or other materials in or on the ground by use of mechanized equipment or by blasting, and includes, but is not limited to auguring; backfilling; drilling; grading; plowing in; pulling in; trenching and tunneling. Tools manipulated only by human or animal power and the tilling of soil for agricultural purposes shall not be deemed excavation."
- What is the excavator required to do if there are marked underground facilities at the worksite? Before using powered equipment near marked underground facilities, excavators are required to verify the location, depth, and direction of run of the facility by means of test holes dug by hand. After verification, a clearance of at least 4 inches must be maintained between powered equipment and the underground facility.
- Who must join the One-Call System? All operators of underground facilities, including municipal systems, are required to be members of the One-Call Notification System serving their area(s) and to mark the location of their facilities near excavation work areas.

Excavators who damage underground facilities due to the failure to follow the regulations are not only subject to civil penalties, but also are liable for repair costs. However, state law exempts excavators from liability for repair costs if the damage is caused by the utility's or municipality's failure to comply with the law, such as failure to participate in the One-Call Notification Systems or failure to accurately mark the location of their underground facilities.

In March 2005, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) designated 811 as the national abbreviated dialing code to be used by state One-Call Notification Systems for providing advance notice of excavation activities to underground facility operators. This nationwide abbreviated dialing code enhances public safety by streamlining the advance notification of excavation activities and reducing the damage to underground facilities. Implementation of the 811 occurred in April 2007.

For more information about Dig Safely New York, go to www.digsafelynewyork.com or call 315-437-7394. For more information about the New York City & Long Island One-Call Center, visit the www.nyclionecall.com Web site or call 1-800-524-7603. For more information on 811, visit the www.call811.com Web site.