

STATE OF NEW YORK

# Public Service Commission

Audrey Zibelman, Chair

Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223

Further Details: James Denn

James.Denn@dps.ny.gov | 518.474.7080

<http://www.dps.ny.gov>

<http://twitter.com/NYSDPS>

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## APRIL IS "DIG SAFELY MONTH"

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

Albany, NY—04/03/14 —The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today announced that it is participating in the nationwide effort to recognize April 2014, as “Dig Safely Month” as a way to remind excavators and contractors that state law requires them to call one of the state's toll-free one-call centers before starting any excavation or digging project.

“It is important to raise awareness of the state's One-Call Notification Systems and the critical role it plays in identifying the location of underground infrastructure facilities,” said Commission Chair Audrey Zibelman. “Damage to utility facilities during excavation can result in loss of utility service, personal injury and property damage. I urge all excavators to do their part in protecting our vital infrastructure by simply dialing 811 before digging.”

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. New York 811 is the One Call Notification System serving New York City and Long Island and Dig Safely New York is other, serving the remainder of the state. When calling from inside the areas served, either can be reached by simply dialing 811.

## Frequently Asked Questions:

- When must notification be made? 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 underground facility operating members so that they can mark the location of any facilities at the excavation site.
- How is notification made? Notification for excavation work anywhere in the state can be made by dialing 811. Alternatively, for excavation on Long Island and the five boroughs of New York City, New York 811 can be called at 1-800-272-4480. For excavation elsewhere in New York State, Dig Safely New York can be called at 1-800-962-7962. 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 Systems? 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 in or near excavation work sites.

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.

For more information about Dig Safely New York, go to [www.digsafelynewyork.com](http://www.digsafelynewyork.com) or call 315-437-7394. For more information about New York 811, visit [www.newyork-811.com](http://www.newyork-811.com) or call 1-800-272-4480. For more information on 811, visit the [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com) Web site. If you have difficulty understanding English, please call us at 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this press release.