

STATE OF NEW YORK

Public Service Commission

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NATIONAL SAFE DIGGING MONTH

-Excavators, Contractors, Homeowners Should Dial "811" Before Digging-

Albany, NY—5/08/08—The New York State Public Service Commission today said the month of May's designation as "National Safe Digging Month" was 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.

"Spring weather has arrived and with it comes accelerated outdoor excavation or digging which can cause accidental damage to utility service, personal injury and property damage," said Commission Chairman Garry Brown. "To avoid unintended consequences resulting from excavation, I urge all New Yorkers to do their part in protecting themselves and our vital infrastructure by simply dialing 811 before digging—a nationwide abbreviated dialing code."

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.

- 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.
- How is notification made? The one-call centers are typically accessed by dialing a toll-free 800 number. The New York City & Long Island One-Call Center covers excavation on Long Island and the five boroughs of New York City, and its number is 1-800-272-4480. Dig Safely New York covers the remainder of New York State, and its number is 1-800-962-7962. In March of 2005, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) designated 811 as the national abbreviated dialing code to be used to contact state one-call centers for providing notification for excavation work. Therefore, notice of intent to excavate anywhere in New York State can be made by dialing 811. Whether dialing the 1-800 number or 811, there is no charge for the call.

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 or call 315-437-7394. For more information about the New York City & Long Island One-Call Center, visit the www.nycli1calldsi.com Web site or call 1-800-524-7603. For more information on 811, visit the www.call811.com Web site.