



New Jersey Board of Public Utilities

NEWS RELEASE

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April 2016 is Underground Damage Prevention Month

– Christie Administration seeks to educate and increase awareness of public safety requirement to call 811 before digging –

Trenton, NJ - Governor Chris Christie proclaimed April 2016 to be Underground Damage Prevention Month to increase awareness of safety precautions and requirements in place to protect the public and workers who dig near underground utility infrastructure. Throughout the month of April, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) is spreading the word to help educate the public and remind contractors and excavators about protecting underground utility infrastructure and safe digging practices.

Underground Damage Prevention Month provides a crucial opportunity to educate residents and business owners of the requirement to call 811 before any excavation project. Residents and business owners serve as the last protection between underground pipes and lines on their property and an excavator's backhoe; if a project is scheduled to begin, but no mark outs exist stop the digging immediately and call 811.

"Whether planning a do-it-yourself project or hiring a professional, by calling 811 three full business days before beginning any outdoor digging project, residents and property owners play an important role in preventing serious injury and service interruptions due to damage to underground utility lines," said Richard S. Mroz, President of the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities. "Anyone who is undertaking a project requiring digging needs to know that safety requirements forbid breaking ground until the utility infrastructure has been clearly marked."

According to the Common Ground Alliance (CGA), an underground utility line is damaged every six minutes nationwide because the utility infrastructure located underground was not marked out prior to digging. Excavation damage remains one of the leading causes of serious pipeline accidents.

This April, as the digging season begins in earnest, spread the word about the importance of calling 811 to know what's below before digging. Every digging job requires a call to 811 – even small projects like planting trees and shrubs.

811 is a free, FCC-designated national number that connects callers from anywhere in the country to their local One Call center. When calling 811, New Jersey residents, business owners or contractors are connected with New Jersey One-Call center. The One-Call center then alerts the appropriate utility companies who are then given three days to mark the approximate location of their lines or pipes with stakes, paint or flags, after which professionals and homeowners can dig safely around.

For more information regarding New Jersey One Call, please visit <http://www.nj1-call.org/>