

## Know Your Turf Before You Dig

Use caution to reduce injury, liability, repairs and delays. Smart and safe digging means knowing what is buried underground before you begin a project. Anyone digging or excavating has to be cautious—this includes contractors, road maintenance crews, telephone pole installers, fence builders, landscapers and even homeowners. Be safe and healthy on the job with these helpful tips provided by Employer Resources Northwest.

### Call Ahead

Every state has a “One Call” hotline, accessible by dialing 811. Each state has its own laws and enforcements regarding its call-before-you-dig program. However, the basic purpose is the same across state lines: to protect telephone service, underground power lines, water pipes, sewer pipes, energy pipelines and workers.

### Know the Facts

There are several misconceptions about One Call. Many contractors, or other workers performing digging tasks, believe they can tell whether there is anything buried underground based on the conditions above. This belief often gives a false sense of security. In reality, many unsafe items beneath the soil—including pipelines carrying dangerous substances like petroleum or natural gas—are not marked as precisely as workers believe.

One common myth is that workers can tell the precise location of a pipeline or other underground feature by drawing a straight line between right-of-way markers. However, right-of-way markers are often much wider than necessary, they usually are not placed precisely over the item and they do not indicate depth.

Underground lines often curve to avoid natural or manmade features between markers. Therefore, using the One Call system is the only way to truly know what is beneath the ground when you are digging.

### Digging Safely

Use the following tips to ensure that while on the job, you are not endangering anyone’s safety or property:

- Only dig in the areas that have been designated and marked off using the One Call system.
- Stop working and inform your supervisor if One Call locator marks are no longer visible due to site activity.
- Never begin digging before the time specified by One Call, which is usually 48 hours after phoning the service.

Even small jobs require a call, so never take on a project without One Call markings. Remember, it is your life that’s on the line.

Jobsite: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Employee (Please Print)	Signature of Employee

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