



News from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission

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DIY OR DOA?

Corporation Commissioners urge Oklahomans to put safety first when it comes to spring projects that involve digging

April is National Safe Digging Month, and the Oklahoma Corporation Commission is reminding Oklahomans that any outdoor digging project this spring should start by calling 811 to have underground lines marked.

Commission Chairman Todd Hiett says the latest survey shows millions of Americans are risking disruption of utility service and possibly fatal injury.

“A poll taken last month by the Common Ground Alliance shows more than 40 percent of homeowners in America have no plans to call 811 before starting digging projects this spring,” said Hiett. “Oklahoma has thousands of miles of buried pipeline and utility cables. The only way to be sure you won’t hit those lines is to have them located and marked. All you have to do is dial 811 and the OKIE 811 service will take it from there.”

Commission Vice Chairman Bob Anthony says those who think something as routine as digging a fence post hole or landscaping aren’t dangerous need to think again.

“Many people wrongly think that they should only call 811 if they are digging a deep hole,” said Anthony. “You can hit a line even if you’re digging relatively shallow holes or plowing. The depth of buried infrastructure can change, bringing pipeline and cables closer to the surface than the homeowner knows. Erosion, soil shifting, and other factors can change how close a line is to the surface.”

Commissioner Dana Murphy says the steps homeowners should take to protect themselves and their community are very simple.

“Always call 811 a few days before digging, no matter how deep you plan to dig or how familiar you think you are with your property,” advised Murphy. “It’s best to plan ahead. For example, call 811 on Monday or Tuesday for a planned weekend project. That will allow enough time for the marking of lines. If you hire a contractor, make sure that contractor has called 811 and lines are marked. Do not allow work to get underway without that assurance.”

Both 811 and 1-800-522-OKIE will put the caller in touch with the same free service, which will arrange to have underground lines marked before digging begins. For more information go to www.okie811.org.

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