



Public Service Commission

NEWS RELEASE
April 10, 2023

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North Dakotans Reminded to Call Before You Dig *Governor Burgum Proclaims Safe Digging Month in North Dakota*

BISMARCK, ND – Governor Doug Burgum has proclaimed April as Safe Digging Month in North Dakota. In recognition, the North Dakota Public Service Commission (PSC) is reminding everyone of the potential dangers and consequences of digging without first calling 8-1-1, North Dakota's Call-Before-You-Dig number.

“As we have been digging out all winter due to enormous snow fall, let us always remember ‘Safe Digging,’” said Commissioner Sheri Haugen-Hoffart, who holds the damage prevention portfolio. “Traditionally, April brings outdoor work, which includes digging. Safe digging month is a way to remind us all to call 811 before starting any digging project.”

North Dakota law requires anyone conducting an excavation to notify 8-1-1 at least two days in advance of digging. Personnel will be sent to mark the locations of the underground facilities, typically within a couple of days. The markings are valid for 21 days after they are placed. This process is coordinated through North Dakota One Call. The Public Service Commission's role is to enforce the requirements of the state's damage prevention laws and take action when violations are reported to the Commission. The PSC can levy a fine up to \$25,000 per violation depending on severity.

Each year North Dakota's underground utility infrastructure is jeopardized by unintentional damage from those who fail to call 8-1-1 to have underground facilities located prior to digging. Since 2009, the PSC has received and processed 306 complaints related to violations of the Call-Before-You-Dig law. In total, approximately \$399,250 in fines have been assessed against companies or individuals who have violated the law. The consequences of striking an underground utility can be severe including explosions resulting in injury or death, service interruptions or damage to the environment.

The significant residential and business growth occurring throughout North Dakota and the increased demand for pipeline infrastructure to support the energy industry have dramatically increased demand for the One-Call Program.

Safe Digging Month is endorsed each April by the North Dakota Public Service Commission, the Common Ground Alliance and the North Dakota One-Call Board. For more information about 8-1-1, visit the North Dakota One-Call Board's website at www.ndonecall.com.

For safety tips, best practices and other information, visit the Common Ground Alliance website at www.commongroundalliance.com. (A copy of the Governor's Proclamation is included on the next page.)

The North Dakota Public Service Commission is a constitutionally created state agency with authority to permit, site and regulate certain business activities in the state including electric and gas utilities, telecommunications companies, power plants, electric transmission lines, pipelines, railroads, auctioneers, commercial weighing devices, pipeline safety and coal mine reclamation. For more information, contact the Public Service Commission at (701) 328-2400 or www.psc.nd.gov.

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STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

PROCLAMATION

SAFE DIGGING MONTH

APRIL 2023

WHEREAS, each year, the nation's underground utility infrastructure is jeopardized by unintentional damage by those who fail to call 811 to have underground facilities located prior to digging, and undesired consequences such as service interruptions, damage to the environment, personal injury and even death are the potential result; and

WHEREAS, the Common Ground Alliance and its stakeholders promote the national Call-Before-You-Dig number, 811, in an effort to reduce these damages; designated by the Federal Communications Commission in 2005, 811 provides potential excavators and homeowners a simple number to reach their local One Call Center to request utility locations at the intended dig site; and

WHEREAS, North Dakota law requires that anyone planning excavation or demolition must notify North Dakota 811 and, if a facility must be located, personnel will be sent to mark the location of underground facilities; and

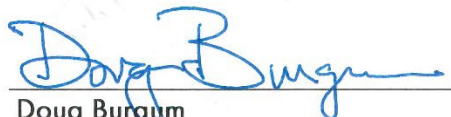
WHEREAS, the North Dakota One Call Board and the North Dakota Public Service Commission promote the national Call-Before-You-Dig number, 811, as well as the use of safe digging practices, in an effort to reduce these damages; and

WHEREAS, through education of safe digging practices, excavators and homeowners can save time and money keeping our nation safe and connected by making a simple call to 811 in advance of any digging project, waiting the required amount of time for the utility to be located; respecting the location marks by maintaining visual definition throughout the excavation; and, finally, digging with care around the marks; and

WHEREAS, all parties agree that safe digging is a shared responsibility, and homeowners and excavators throughout the state are encouraged to always call 811 before digging.

NOW, THEREFORE, as Governor of the State of North Dakota, I do hereby proclaim
April 2023, **SAFE DIGGING MONTH** in the State of North Dakota.




Doug Burgum
GOVERNOR

ATTEST: 
Michael Howe
SECRETARY OF STATE