

When your project requires you to dig within the tolerance zone, hand dig and protect the underground utility line from damage. The following hand digging best practices can help to reduce damages:

- Use round or blunt edge shovels;
- Begin digging to the side of the marked utility line and extend the hole towards the utility mark;
- Once the utility line is visible, keep the face of the shovel parallel with the utility line and use all precautions to remove the soil from around the utility line;
- Fully expose the utility line where you are going to be crossing it; and
- Protect the exposed utility line from damage.

#### Quick Tips for Homeowners








- Call on Monday or Tuesday if you plan to dig on Saturday or Sunday. This will allow the utility companies time to mark their utility lines.
- Utility companies do not mark privately owned utility lines such as sprinkler systems, lines to detached garages and sheds, or private water and sewer laterals.
- Do not remove the marking flags if you see them in your yard.
- If you suspect you smell natural gas, leave the area, call **911** and contact your gas company immediately.
- You may request marking of underground utility lines by visiting:

[www.va811.com/single-address-tickets](http://www.va811.com/single-address-tickets)

VA811 Provides Emergency Service 365 Days a Year, 24 Hours a Day.

If you see markings on or close to your property and wish to get more information about a planned excavation, visit [www.va811.com](http://www.va811.com). Point to "Homeowners", click on "What do the markings mean?", click on "Ticket Search", then click on "Click here to access Ticket Search." Select the "Month" that you first noticed the markings, then enter your street name and click "Search by Street."

#### What are the different markings?

-  Electric Power Lines, Cables, Conduit and Lighting Cables
-  Gas, Oil, Steam, Petroleum or Gaseous Materials
-  Communications, Alarm or Signal Lines, Cables or Conduit
-  Potable Water
-  Sewer and Drain Lines
-  Non-Potable Water, Reclaimed Water, Irrigation and Slurry lines
-  Temporary Survey Markings
-  Proposed Excavation

For more information contact the State Corporation Commission Division of Utility and Railroad Safety <https://www.scc.virginia.gov/pages/Utility-Railroad-Safety> or

[www.va811.com](http://www.va811.com)  

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Did you know there are utility lines buried in your yard? Help protect them by calling 811 before starting any digging project.



# Virginia





Please do your part to protect underground utility lines that provide you and your community with essential utility services. Damaging an underground utility line can be dangerous. A damaged pipe or cable can cause utility outages, expensive repairs, legal problems, serious injury or death. This is why it is a good idea to call 811, even for homeowners digging on their own property.



Dig With **C A R E**  
Keep Virginia Safe!

**C** Call 811 before you dig.

**Q:** What is 811?

**A:** 811 is a national number to call before digging. One free call to 811 begins the process of getting underground utility lines marked. If you are planning a project, like planting a tree or installing a fence, no matter how big or small your project may be, calling 811 is the first step in safe digging.

**Q:** What information do I need to provide when I call 811?

**A:** Please have the following information available:

- Your name, address, telephone number and email (if available);
- Specific location of the work;
- Alternate telephone number for you (if available); and
- Type of work being performed.

**A** Allow required time for marking.

**Q:** If I hire a contractor to dig on my property, should I call 811 for them?

**A:** No, under Virginia Law, the person actually performing the digging must call 811.

**Q:** How long does it take for the utility lines to be marked?

**A:** The utility companies have 48 hours beginning at 7:00 a.m. the next working day (working days exclude Saturdays, Sundays, and legal state and national holidays) to mark all underground utility lines which may be in your project area. The color code chart on the back of this brochure will help you determine what type of utility lines are in your project area.



**R** Respect the Marks.

**Q:** Who is responsible to protect the marks once they have been placed on the ground?

**A:** It is the responsibility of the person digging to protect the marks from the time the project begins until the marks are no longer needed to safely dig around the utility lines.

**Q:** What should I do if the marks are destroyed by my digging or the weather?

**A:** Call 811 and request a re-mark. The utility companies will re-mark the lines.

**E** Excavate carefully.

**Q:** What if I have to dig near the utility marks?

**A:** There is a tolerance zone when digging near underground utility lines. The tolerance zone is 2 feet (plus the width of the utility line, if known) on either side of the marked underground utility line. No mechanized equipment of any kind may be used in the tolerance zone.

