

Marking Colors



White - Proposed Excavation



Pink - Temporary Survey Markings



Red - Electric Power Lines, Cables, Conduit and Lighting Cables



Yellow - Gas, Oil, Steam, Petroleum or Gaseous Materials



Orange - Communication, Alarm or Signal Lines, Cables or Conduit



Blue - Potable Water



Purple - Reclaimed Water, Irrigation and Slurry Lines



Green - Sewer and Drain Lines

VA811's member utility operators will mark their underground utility lines¹ if they exist in your project area, in the time allowed by law using the applicable colors shown above.

Underground utilities may be marked with paint, flags or stakes or with any combination of these means.

Utility marks indicate the approximate horizontal location of the underground utility line on the ground to within two feet of either side of the underground utility line.

Remember, utilities typically do not mark privately-owned underground lines such as sprinkler systems, power lines to garages, septic systems and wells as an example. It is your responsibility to locate private underground utility lines and mark them according to Virginia law or hire someone to do so accordingly.

¹ In some cases, member utility operators will use the services of contract locators to mark their underground utility lines.

Contacting VA811 is Easy and Free

Online:

va811.com

Call:

811



For more information regarding Virginia's damage prevention program, or to report an issue, contact the State Corporation Commission's Division of Utility and Railroad Safety.

Online:

scc.virginia.gov/pages/utility-railroad-safety

Email:

vadamageprevention@scc.virginia.gov

Call:

804-371-9980

Write:

Damage Prevention Investigator
Division of Utility and Railroad Safety
State Corporation Commission
P.O. Box 1197
Richmond, Virginia 23218



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Virginia
Excavation or Demolition
A Guide for Safe

SCC
STATE CORPORATION
COMMISSION



**Know
What's
Below**



Prepared By
Division of Utility and Railroad Safety
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Whether your project is big or small, always dig with **C.A.R.E.**

C Contact VA811 before you dig.

Contacting VA811 before you excavate or demolish is a critical step for a safe excavation or demolition.

If you are hiring a contractor to do work that requires any excavation or demolition, it is their responsibility to contact VA811. Always confirm with your contractor that they have a valid ticket to excavate or demolish before they begin.

A Allow required time for marking.

Know What's Below! Once you contact VA811, you must wait 48 hours beginning the following *Working Day* before you begin to excavate or demolish. During this waiting period, the applicable utility operators will mark their lines.

You may begin your project earlier if VA811 informs you that no utility operators will be notified; or

if you confirm the status of your marking request from VA811's *Positive Response System*, that all applicable utility operators have either marked their lines, or their lines are not in conflict with your project. You may check the marking status at VA811.com or by calling 811. Contacting the *Positive Response System* is an automated process and you will need your VA811 ticket number.

R Respect the marks.

Protect and preserve the utility markings until you have completed your excavation or demolition.

If utility line markings become illegible, contact VA811 and request a remarking; never remark them yourself.

E Excavate carefully.

Take all reasonable steps to properly protect, support and backfill underground utility lines.

If you will be excavating or demolishing within 2 feet of a marked utility line location, first expose the utility line to determine the depth and diameter by hand digging. For parallel excavations, do so at a reasonable distance along the line of excavation.

NEVER use mechanized equipment within 2 feet of an exposed utility line!

Do your part to protect underground utility lines. Damaging an underground utility line can have far-reaching consequences; such as utility outages, property damage, expensive repairs, environmental issues, legal problems, serious injury or worse!

Once you contact VA811, and prior to beginning your excavation or demolition, verify you are at the correct location. To the best of your ability, check for clear evidence of unmarked utility lines. Evidence may include prior knowledge of an existing utility line, faded marks from previous markings or visual evidence of an underground utility line, i.e. utility meters, pedestals, valve box covers and manhole covers, etc. If unmarked utility lines are identified, do not begin your project. Contact 811 and request a *Three Hour Notice*. The applicable utility operators are required to respond within 3 hours of your contact.

If there is an *Emergency* condition that requires you to excavate or demolish to correct the problem, call 811 and request an *Emergency Ticket*. Utility operators are required to respond to an emergency notice as soon as possible but no later than three hours from your call.

The following hand digging best practices can help reduce damages:

Use round or blunt edge shovels.

Begin digging to the side of the marked utility line; keep the face of the shovel parallel with the utility line mark 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 you are going to cross to establish its vertical depth, diameter and other conditions that may be in conflict with your project.

Always protect exposed utility lines from damage.

Excavation means any operation in which earth, rock, or other material in the ground is moved, removed, or otherwise displaced by means of any tools, equipment, or explosives and includes, without limitation, grading, trenching, digging, ditching, dredging, drilling, augering, tunneling, scraping, cable or pipe plowing and driving, wrecking, razing, rendering, moving, or removing any structure or mass of material.

Demolition means any operation by which a structure or mass of material is wrecked, razed, rendered, moved, or removed by means of any tools, equipment, or discharge of explosives which could damage underground utility lines.

Working Day means every day except Saturdays, Sundays, and legal state and national holidays.

Emergency means a sudden or unexpected occurrence involving a clear and imminent danger, demanding immediate action to prevent or mitigate loss of, or damage to, life, health, property, or essential public services. Utility line location markings placed in response to an emergency are valid until the emergency condition ceases to exist.

Also, all non-emergency tickets issued by VA811 for the purpose of excavation or demolition, are valid for 15 working days beginning at 7:00 a.m. the next working day after you contact VA811. If your project will take longer than 15 working days to complete, contact VA811 3 working days before the expiration date and request an *Update Ticket*. Excavating on an expired ticket is a violation of Virginia law.

In Case of Utility Line Damage or Emergencies:

Immediately notify the utility operator if a damage, dislocation or disturbance of an underground utility line occurs.

If damage creates an emergency, take immediate steps to safeguard life, health and property.

If the damage results in the escape of any flammable, toxic, or corrosive gas or liquid, promptly report to other appropriate authorities by calling the 911 emergency telephone number.

At any time you suspect you smell natural gas, leave the area, call 911 and contact your gas company immediately.