



For Immediate Release
April 19, 2018

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April is *Safe Digging Month*
The ICC and Governor Bruce Rauner Remind Illinoisans:
“Call 811 Before You Dig”

SPRINGFIELD... In observance of National Safe Digging Month, the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) joins Governor Bruce Rauner in raising awareness about the importance of calling 811 before starting outdoor projects that involve digging. An underground utility line is damaged once every nine minutes nationwide because a homeowner or professional excavator decided to dig without first calling 811. Governor Bruce Rauner has proclaimed April 2018 as *Safe Digging Month* in Illinois.

“Calling 811 not only protects our underground utility infrastructure and prevents service disruptions in our community, but it also can potentially save lives. Striking a gas line can cause serious injury, or even death,” said ICC Chairman Brien J. Sheahan. “The ICC thanks Governor Rauner for shining a spotlight on this important issue.”

Illinois law requires homeowners and professional excavators to call 811 at least 48 hours (two business days) before digging. Building a deck, installing a fence or mailbox, or simply planting a tree are all examples of projects that require the 811 call to order utility companies to locate the underground lines they own with color-coded markings. Digging without knowing the approximate location of underground utilities can result in serious injuries, service disruptions and costly repairs when gas, electric, communications, water and sewer lines are damaged.

811 is a convenient three-digit phone number that will reach either JULIE (Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators) across most of Illinois, or 811 Chicago (formerly known as DIGGER) within the City of Chicago. This toll-free number operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Locate requests have a 28-day life, so it is recommended the digging project begins within 14 calendar days from the call. Once a site has been accurately marked, it is safe to begin digging around the marked areas.

Calling 811 can also potentially save property owners and excavators tens of thousands of dollars in damages and penalties. In 2017, ICC staff issued 108 warnings and 82 citations for safe digging violations resulting in more than \$106,533 in penalties. Violations issued to excavators and homeowners included not having a valid locate request or not digging carefully around marked underground utility facilities, and for utilities, failure to mark their facilities in a timely manner. The ICC levied penalties as part of its [One-Call](#) enforcement efforts.

For more information about *Safe Digging Month* and the “Call 811” process visit:

- JULIE’s website: www.illinois1call.com
- 811 Chicago’s website: <https://ipi.cityofchicago.org/Digger>
- The Common Ground Alliance website: <http://commongroundalliance.com/damage-prevention/toolkits/811-campaign>

To view Governor Rauner’s proclamation, click [here](#).

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About the Illinois Commerce Commission

The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) is a quasi-judicial body made up of five Commissioners. Through its Public Utility Program, the Commission oversees the provision of adequate, reliable, efficient and safe utility services at the least possible cost to Illinois citizens served by electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water and sewer public utility companies. Through its Transportation Regulatory Program, the Commission oversees public safety and consumer protection programs with regard to intrastate commercial motor carriers of general freight, household goods movers, relocation towers, safety towers, personal property warehouses and repossession agencies. The Commission’s Rail Safety Program also inspects and regulates the general safety of railroad tracks, facilities and equipment in the state.

To learn more about the Commission, its offices and bureaus, click [here](#). If you are a consumer who needs help resolving a utility dispute call 800-524-0795 or file an online complaint [here](#). For a complaint related to transportation, call 217-782-6448.

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