



**For Immediate Release
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The ICC Urges You to “Call Before You Dig” by Dialing 8-1-1 An important reminder for farmers leading up to harvest season

SPRINGFIELD... The Illinois Commerce Commission(ICC) reminds all Illinoisans who are planning a digging project, regardless of how small, that State law requires you to contact the One-Call Notice system known as *JULIE* or *8-1-1 Chicago* (formerly known as *DIGGER*) before starting your excavating project. Doing so will result in having all underground utility lines located and marked on the property to avoid damage or injury.

This urgent reminder comes after the Safety and Reliability Division of the ICC issued a Notice of Violation on July 10 regarding an incident that resulted in the death of two farmers, and the injury of two other people, in northern Illinois late last year.

The Notice indicates that on the morning of December 5, 2017, employees of M&R Farms in Lee County ruptured a 20-inch steel natural gas transmission pipeline with a tilling machine while excavating to place drainage tile in a field near the intersection of IL. Rte. 38 and Nachusa Rd., resulting in an explosion. The Notice concludes that M&R Farms did not submit a locate request for this project to *JULIE* in order to locate and mark underground utility lines.

The [Illinois Underground Utility Facilities Damage Prevention Act](#) requires all excavators to make a locate request notice not more than 14 days nor less than 48 hours (exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays) in advance of the digging project, which includes demolition projects.

“This tragic event underscores the importance of anyone engaged in excavation making absolutely certain they make a locate request, and allow time for utilities to mark underground lines,” said Eric Lounsberry, Director of the ICC’s Safety and Reliability Division. “A good rule of thumb is never to use a shovel or any other excavating equipment without looking for colored flags or paint marking the location of buried utility lines. Assuming someone else has made the locate request simply isn’t safe and, as we have seen, can be a matter of life or death.”

Making a locate request is as simple as dialing 8-1-1. Call center agents are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Locate requests, which can be made at no cost, can also be completed by visiting the websites of either [8-1-1 Chicago](#) (within Chicago city limits) or [JULIE](#) (elsewhere in Illinois). Once a request is made, each utility will send a trained technician to your property to mark the location of underground utility lines using flags or paint with the appropriate [color codes](#).

“An underground utility line is damaged once every nine minutes nationwide because a homeowner or professional excavator began a digging project without first calling 8-1-1,” added Bill Riley, Assistant Director of the ICC’s Safety and Reliability Division. “Underground utility lines can be found at almost any depth, so household tasks as simple as planting a tree or installing a swing set can result in striking an underground utility line.”

Please visit the Illinois Commerce Commission website to learn more about our [Gas Pipeline Safety Program](#) and our [Illinois One-Call Enforcement Efforts](#).

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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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