



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **ICC, Governor Pritzker Remind Illinoisans: Call 8-1-1 Before You Dig**

Springfield... April is Safe Digging Month, and the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) is joining Governor JB Pritzker to increase awareness of the “Call 811” public safety initiative in order to locate underground utility lines before outdoor projects are started.

An underground utility line is damaged during a digging project once every six minutes. Homeowners and professional excavators who fail to “Call 811” before digging cause approximately 40 percent of all damages, which can disrupt service or cause personal injury. This statistic jumps to 60 percent for landscaping and fence-building projects.

A request to locate underground utility lines can be made by dialing the convenient three-digit phone number “811” or online using the links below. Requests are managed by *JULIE, Inc.* (Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators) across most of Illinois, or *811 Chicago* within the city limits of Chicago. Both *JULIE* and *811 Chicago* operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Notably, the cost of the call and the locating services are free.

Illinois law requires homeowners and professional excavators to call 811 at least 48 hours (or two business days) before starting an outdoor digging project. Installing a mailbox, building a deck, and planting a tree or garden are examples of activities that require locating the underground lines they own with color-coded markings. The digging project must begin within 14 calendar days from the call, and locate requests have a 28-day life.

“Digging projects of any depth require landowners and contractors to call 811 in advance to avoid serious injury and secure the safety of gas, telecommunications or other underground utilities,” said ICC Executive Director Cholly Smith. “Damaging telecommunication or other lines may result in costly service interruptions to homes and businesses throughout the community. Governor Pritzker’s Safe Digging Month proclamation emphasizes a critical safety message that is relevant throughout the year.”

In 2018, ICC staff issued 125 warnings and 105 citations for safe digging violations resulting in \$110,000 in penalties against utilities and over \$79,000 in penalties against excavators. 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 properly or in a timely manner. The ICC levied penalties as part of its One-Call enforcement efforts.

To make locate requests online, or for more information on *Safe Digging Month* and the “Call 811” process visit:

[JULIE’s website](#) (for project within most of Illinois)

[811 Chicago’s website](#) (for projects within Chicago city limits)

[The Common Ground Alliance](#)

Click here for a copy of [Governor Pritzker’s proclamation](#)

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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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