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### **Call 811 Before You Dig: It is the Law!**

*Calling 811 Reduces Risk of Damaged Utility Lines by 99 Percent*

**DALLAS** (August 11, 2016) – Did you know that, before you dig, it is required by law to call 811 to have all buried utility lines located and marked? [Atmos Energy](#) wants to thank homeowners and excavators alike for observing the law and keeping our communities safe by always calling 811 before digging.

Since 2008, Atmos Energy has seen a 36 percent increase in requests by the public to have underground natural gas lines marked. Once underground utility lines are marked, it is important to take special care around all line markings by digging by hand.

“The greatest risk to our natural gas pipelines is accidental damage while digging,” said John Paris, president of Atmos Energy’s Mid-Tex division. “Even minor damage, such as a scrape, dent, or crease in a pipeline or its coating, can cause a leak.”

Every time the excavating public calls 811 before digging, the chance of hitting an underground utility line decreases to 99.9 percent. When calling 811, homeowners and contractors are connected to their local one-call center, which notifies the appropriate utility companies of their intent to dig. Professional locators are then sent to the digging site to mark the locations of underground utility-owned lines with flags and spray paint, free of charge.

“Atmos Energy located 1.5 million underground natural gas lines in 2015. We appreciate our customers observing this important safety law. Calling 811 is the law in every state that we serve. All excavators call 811 at least three business days before digging on public or private property,” said Paris.

For more information, visit [atmosenergy.com/811](http://atmosenergy.com/811) or [call811.com](http://call811.com).

#### **About Atmos Energy**

Atmos Energy Corporation, headquartered in Dallas, is the country's largest natural-gas-only distributor, serving more than 3 million natural gas distribution customers in about 1,400 communities in eight states from the Blue Ridge Mountains in the East to the Rocky Mountains in the West. Atmos Energy manages company-owned natural gas pipeline and storage assets, including one of the largest intrastate natural gas pipeline systems in Texas and also provides natural gas marketing and procurement services to industrial, commercial and municipal customers primarily in the Midwest and Southeast. For more information, visit [www.atmosenergy.com](http://www.atmosenergy.com). Atmos Energy can also be accessed through social media platforms such as [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#).

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## 811 Day Fact Sheet

- ✓ **What is 811?**
  - 811 is the national toll-free telephone number that Congress enacted to prevent damages to underground utility lines caused by digging.
  
- ✓ **How does it work?**
  - Call 811 before digging to have all buried utility lines located and marked.
  - The 811 operator will ask a few questions about your project and will send to the digging site professional line locators.
  - The line locators will stake different colored flags or spray temporary paint on the ground to mark the paths of natural gas pipes, electric lines and all other underground utilities.
  
- ✓ **Why should you call 811?**
  - Calling 811 is a fast and easy way to protect yourself from digging into a buried natural gas pipeline, high-voltage electric line, telecommunication conduit, water line or sewer.
  - It is the law in all 50 states that you must call 811 before digging to prevent damages.
  - Careless digging ranks as the major cause of underground pipeline accidents.
  - Research studies show that calling 811 prevents 999 excavation accidents out of 1,000.
  
- ✓ **Who should call?**
  - Everyone must call 811 before digging. Some examples include
    - Homeowners planting trees, building fences or installing mailboxes;
    - Excavation companies digging foundations, contractors laying driveways, landscapers installing sprinkler systems; and
    - Farmers, ranchers and anybody who plans to dig.
  
- ✓ **When should you call 811?**
  - Call 811 at least *three* business days before digging. This requirement differs by state; so, call 811 to learn your state's rules if you are uncertain. (*The 811 service cannot mark buried lines that belong to a property owner. A commercial line-locating firm or licensed plumber should be called in advance to mark all nonutility lines.*)
  
- ✓ **How much does it cost?**
  - It's free. The 811 service does not charge for locating any utility lines or explaining state excavation laws.
  
- ✓ **What should you do after utility lines are marked?**
  - Take special care when working around all utility line markings.
  - Dig by hand in the tolerance zones indicated by the line markings.
  - Even if you only nick, scrape or dent a natural gas pipeline, call 911 and then call Atmos Energy's emergency number at 866-322-8667, so that it can inspect the pipeline and make any repairs. Even minor damage can weaken a pipeline and cause a future leak.

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