

# Excavator Beware<sup>®</sup>

Dig safely around natural gas lines



Produced by Culver Media for National Grid

## Smell Gas. Act Fast.

To report gas emergencies, call **911** and **National Grid** immediately.

Massachusetts: **1-800-233-5325**

Rhode Island: **1-800-640-1595**

New York:

Long Island and the Rockaways: **1-800-490-0045**

Metro New York: **1-718-643-4050**

Upstate New York: **1-800-892-2345**

[ngridssafety.com/contractors](http://ngridssafety.com/contractors)

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# Notify 811 before you dig



**State law requires you to contact 811 by phone or online well in advance of digging or moving earth in any way – even for small jobs.** This free service will notify member utilities near your dig site to mark the location of their underground lines so you can dig a safe distance away from them.

**Massachusetts and Rhode Island:**  
Call **811** or **1-888-DIG-SAFE (344-7233)**  
[digsafe.com](http://digsafe.com)

**Metro New York, Long Island and the Rockaways:**  
Call **811** or **1-800-272-4480**  
[NewYork-811.com](http://NewYork-811.com)

**Upstate New York:**  
Call **811** or **1-800-962-7962**  
[digsafelynewyork.com](http://digsafelynewyork.com)



**Know what's below.  
811 before you dig.**

If you don't notify 811, you risk hitting an underground line. You or your coworkers could be hurt or killed, and you will be held liable for damages.









Not all utilities are members of 811. You are responsible for notifying non-member utilities. For more information, check with 811 in the state where you will be digging.

## 811 safety training

As of May 4, 2019, any excavators hired by local government in New York State will be required to have completed an approved excavation safety training program. For more information, see [digsafelynewyork.com/CEP](http://digsafelynewyork.com/CEP) (for Upstate New York) or [new-york-811.com/new-york-811-safety-education-training](http://new-york-811.com/new-york-811-safety-education-training) (for Downstate New York).



## American Public Works Association color code for locator marks

-  Electric power lines
-  Temporary survey markings
-  Proposed excavation
-  Gas, oil or steam
-  Potable water
-  Sewer and drain lines
-  Communications lines, cables or conduit
-  Reclaimed water, irrigation and slurry lines



**If you find an unmarked line, stop digging and call 811 immediately.**

# Five steps to a safe excavation

**1 Plan your job and pre-mark your dig area** with white paint, flags and/or stakes. This allows locators to more easily identify and mark affected utility lines.

**2 Call 811 or make an online dig ticket request** before any excavation starts. Be prepared with specific details about your dig site, such as the street address and the size of your excavation.

**3 Wait the required time** for utilities to locate and mark their lines.

- Massachusetts and Rhode Island: **At least 72 hours** excluding weekends and legal holidays.
- New York: **At least two full working days** excluding the date of your call, weekends and legal holidays.

**4 Respect the marks** when digging. Gas pipelines within your dig area will be marked with yellow paint or flags. Maintain the marks for the duration of the job.

**5 Dig with care.** Do not use mechanical excavation equipment within the “tolerance zone,” which spans the width of a marked utility plus 24 inches from each indicated outside edge in New York, and 18 inches in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. For your safety, use **ONLY** hand tools or vacuum technology within this zone.



# Know when to **stop** digging



- **If there are no locate marks after you have waited the required time**, do NOT dig. Notify 811 and wait until utility lines are marked or you have been notified that the area is clear of lines.
- **If you do not understand the locate marks**, do NOT dig. Ask your supervisor what you must do to work safely.
- **If you cannot visually verify the location of marked natural gas pipelines by hand digging**, STOP digging and contact National Grid immediately.
- **If you find unmarked, mismarked or seemingly abandoned facilities**, STOP digging. Assume all utility lines are in service and report them to 811.
- **If you see signs of something buried after the locate was complete**, such as a fresh trench, STOP digging. Notify 811.
- **If the marks fade or are destroyed**, STOP digging and contact 811 to request a new ticket. Do not resume digging until the area is re-marked.

Support gas pipelines during excavation and backfill activities to avoid pipes being damaged by their own weight or soil compaction. Notify National Grid whenever cast-iron gas pipe is exposed or falls within an excavation trench's angle of repose.



# Watch out around gas pipeline markers

**High-visibility markers with National Grid's 24-hour emergency phone number indicate the general location of our high-pressure transmission pipelines.** These markers do not show the exact location, path, depth or number of gas pipelines in the area. In addition, pipelines may not follow a straight course between markers.

**These markers are usually found at roadways, railroad crossings and other points along the pipeline route.** If you notice any type of suspicious activity near a pipeline marker, or if you see construction occurring near a marker with no utility personnel present, call the number listed on the marker to report it.

Maps can also be viewed to identify the approximate locations of gas transmission pipelines. To view these maps, visit the National Pipeline Mapping System web site: <https://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov>.

**Pipeline markers and maps do not show gas distribution main lines or service lines.** Never use them as a substitute for notifying **811** to have all utility lines in your dig area located and marked.

**If you will be working within 15 feet of a high-pressure natural gas transmission pipeline:** Prior to digging, you are required to attend an on-site meeting and/or have contact with qualified National Grid representatives to help reduce the risk of excavation-related damage. National Grid **MUST** be on-site during the excavation.



Natural gas pipeline markers are generally yellow and black. They're placed near pipelines but not necessarily directly on top of them.



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# Learn the signs of a gas pipeline leak



Natural gas that leaks from underground pipelines may cause bubbling in water, blow dirt up into the air and kill grass or plants. Damaged or exposed gas pipes can be a source of leaks.

**Natural gas utilities add a distinctive, sulfur-like odor to natural gas to help people detect leaks.** However, in some cases, you may not be able to smell this odor. And gas in transmission lines may not be odorized.

**Do not rely on your nose alone to detect a leak. Use your senses of sight and hearing as well.**

Here are the signs:

- a hissing, whistling or roaring sound
- dirt blowing into the air from a hole in the ground
- continuous bubbling in water
- dead or dying vegetation (in an otherwise moist area) over or near a pipeline
- an exposed pipeline after a fire, flood or other disaster
- a damaged connection to a gas appliance.



# Natural gas emergencies

**If you hit a gas pipeline and/or suspect a gas leak, assume there's a danger** and take these precautions:

- **Leave your equipment behind.** Warn others of the danger, and leave the area quickly. Stay away until utility personnel say it is safe to return.
- **Do not use matches, lighters or anything electrical – even a phone.** A spark could ignite the gas and cause a fire or explosion.
- **Do not operate underground pipeline valves or attempt to stop the flow of gas.** Never bury a contacted pipeline.
- **From a safe location, call 911 and National Grid immediately.** Call if you make ANY contact with a natural gas line, even if there is no visible damage. Just scraping the coating on a gas pipe or cutting a tracer wire can cause the pipeline to fail in the future.

– Excavators are required by law to call 911 in the event of escaping gas.

- **Report the incident to your supervisor.**

**Review your emergency plan before work begins** so everyone knows what to do in case of a natural gas pipeline contact.





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Dig safely around natural gas lines

Whether you operate heavy equipment or use handheld tools, when you dig you risk contacting natural gas pipelines. Use these tips to stay safe:

- **Notify 811 well in advance** of digging or moving earth in any way – even for small jobs.
- **Respect the locate marks** and follow them when digging.
- **Dig with care** in the vicinity of buried natural gas pipelines.
- **If you find an unmarked or mismarked line**, stop digging and notify **811**.
- **Report any suspicious activity near a natural gas pipeline marker**.
- **Don't rely on your nose alone.** Be alert for the many warning signs of a natural gas leak.
- To report a natural gas emergency, **call 911** and National Grid immediately.



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