



## Landscaping and fencing safety

You've notified 811, and all buried utility lines on your job site have been located and marked. Now your landscaping and fencing dig work can begin, right?

Not so fast! Locate marks are not precisely accurate and never indicate depth. First, you'll need to verify the line's exact location and depth by hand digging or other non-intrusive methods. You must do this before you can power-dig within the tolerance zone on either side of the indicated outside edge of a marked utility line. (This zone is 24" in New York and 18" in Massachusetts and Rhode Island).

### Hand-digging tips

Whenever you hand dig near buried utility lines, take care to prevent damage and protect yourself from injury:



- **Use a rounded or blunt-edged shovel.** Sharp tools like pickaxes, mattocks, pry bars and pointed spades may gouge or puncture lines.
- **Begin digging off to the side of the marked utility line.** Use a gentle, prying motion to break away soil as you approach the utility laterally.
- **Never stab at the soil** or stomp on the shovel with both feet.
- **Proceed cautiously.** Don't assume the marks are accurate or that the utility depth is predictable.
- **Dig until you find the actual line,** not just a tracer wire or warning tape.

### Be aware of above-ground hazards too

Look for power lines, service drops, guy wires and pad-mounted equipment on or near the job site. Assume all power lines are energized, and keep people, tools, materials and vehicles at least **10 feet away** from them.

### Report ALL damage

Even a slight gouge, scrape or dent to a utility line, its coating or its tracer wire may cause a break or leak, or make the line unlocatable in the future. This can result in fire, explosion and loss of life and property. Protect all exposed utility lines and check them regularly for damage. Before you backfill, check them again. Report any damage to National Grid so our crews can inspect the line and make the necessary repairs. **Remember, if natural gas is leaking, you must call 911 immediately. It's the law!**

For more contractor safety information, visit [ngrid.com/safety](https://ngrid.com/safety).

To report emergencies, call 911 and National Grid immediately.  
**Smell Gas. Act Fast.**