



Tips of the Trade

Safe hand-digging practices

Welcome to National Grid's Tips of the Trade. National Grid is committed to your safety, and these tips are intended to help you work safely near our facilities. Please review these tips with your coworkers at your tailgate or toolbox meetings before work begins.

Please help us improve our safety tips to meet your training needs. Take our two-minute survey.

[Take Survey](#)

You've called 811 and all buried utility lines on your job site have been located and marked. Now your power-digging work can begin, right?

Not so fast. Before you can safely work near an underground utility line, you must first hand dig to expose the line and verify its exact location and depth. Hand digging requirements vary by state.

- **In New York:** For your safety, only use hand tools or vacuum technology within one half of the known diameter plus 24 inches on either side of the designated centerline of buried utilities.
- **In Massachusetts and Rhode Island:** Power digging is not allowed, and hand digging or other nonintrusive methods are required, within 18 inches of either side of the marked location of buried utilities.



Dig with care

Whenever you hand dig near buried utility lines, take care to prevent damage:

- **Use a rounded or blunt-edged shovel.** Sharp tools like pickaxes, mattocks, pry bars or pointed spades may gouge or puncture lines.
- **Start your 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 pry against a utility line** to remove soil stab at the soil or stomp on the shovel with both feet.

Protect yourself

Always wear proper personal protective equipment (PPE) and take care to prevent muscle strain. Don't twist your torso to move the dirt; move your feet to turn your entire body. Alternate shoveling between your left and right sides, and take breaks to prevent fatigue.

Report ALL damage

Even a slight gouge, scrape or dent in a utility conduit or its coating may cause a catastrophic break or leak in the future. Protect all exposed utility lines and check them regularly for damage. Before you backfill, check them again. Report any damage to National Grid, so crews can inspect the line and make the necessary repairs.

Would you like to know more?

Additional overhead and digging guidelines, case studies, instructional videos and training tools can all be found, at no charge to you, on [National Grid's e-SMARTworkers](#) website.

Do you like this email series? Do you find the information helpful? We'd like to know. Please reply to this email and tell us what you think, or let us know what topics you'd like to see in future emails.

For more contractor safety information, visit ngridssafety.com.



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

Smell Gas. Act Fast.

Call 811 or enter an online request at least 72 hours before digging in Massachusetts and Rhode Island (excluding weekends and legal holidays) and at least two full working days in New York (excluding the day you call and weekends and legal holidays). It's the law!

- **Massachusetts and Rhode Island:** digsafe.com
- **Upstate New York:** digsafelynewyork.com
- **Metro New York, Long Island and the Rockaways:** newyork-811.com

In case of an emergency, call 911 and National Grid.

National Grid emergency contacts:

Massachusetts contacts

Gas emergencies:
1-800-233-5325

Electric emergencies:
1-800-465-1212

New York contacts

Gas emergencies:
Long Island and the
Rockaways:
1-800-490-0045

Metro NY:
1-718-643-4050

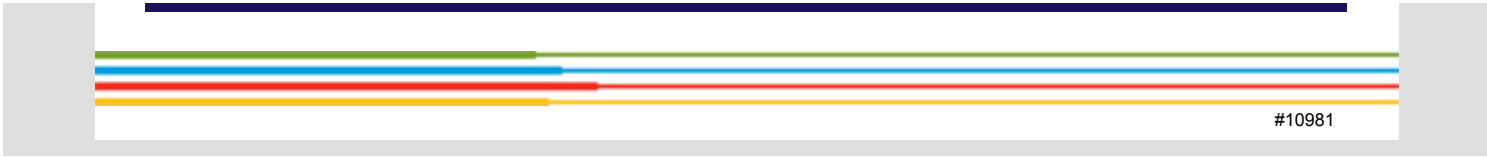
Upstate NY:
1-800-892-2345

Electric emergencies:
1-800-867-5222

Rhode Island contacts

Gas emergencies:
1-800-640-1595

Electric emergencies:
1-800-465-1212



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