

Potholing essentials



If you plan to cross or work near underground utility lines, getting the 811 locate done is the first step – but not the only step – to identify where lines are buried. After utilities have been located and marked, you must verify the precise depth and location of each line. Potholing (or daylighting) is the safest way to do this.

Don't make assumptions

Assuming you know the exact location of a utility line before power digging is a recipe for disaster. Keep in mind that flags and painted lines from an 811 locate indicate the direction in which the marked utility runs and its approximate location. The only way to verify a line's actual depth and location and ensure that the line is out of harm's way is to dig a pothole and see the line with your own eyes.



Choose the appropriate method

Potholing involves digging small test holes to expose and visually verify a marked utility line. For small, straightforward projects, manual digging with blunt tools may be sufficient. However, larger and more complex projects may require pressurized techniques, such as vacuum and hydro excavation, to excavate around underground utilities buried deep, in tight spaces or in highly compacted soil.

Dig with care

Pothole to the depth of your planned excavation. If hand digging, use only blunt-edged tools, such as a rounded or blunt-edged shovel. Sharp tools like pickaxes, mattocks, pry bars or pointed spades may gouge or puncture lines. If using a hydrovac, opt for higher flow, lower pressure and a spinner tip.

Report ALL damage

Even a slight gouge, scrape or dent to a utility conduit or its coating may interrupt service or cause a hazard. If you contact a utility line while potholing, report it to National Grid immediately, even if damage is not readily apparent. Our crews will inspect the line and make the necessary repairs.

Smell Gas. Act Fast. Be the one to call 911.

To report emergencies, **call 911** and **National Grid** immediately.
Always **call 911** if you suspect a gas leak!