

Massachusetts Safe Excavation Checklist

Use this checklist as your step-by-step guide to help prevent dangerous and costly damage to underground natural gas pipelines and other utilities.

Always contact your state 811 center before digging and for current requirements.

- ☐ 1. **State law requires calling 811 or making an online request** for utility locates **at least 72 hours** before any excavation, excluding weekends and legal holidays. At no cost to you, **Dig Safe®** will notify member underground facility owners to mark buried lines in your dig area. Allow more time for large projects.
 - **Call 811 or 1-888-DIG-SAFE (344-7233) | digsafe.com**
 - ☐ 2. **Notify non-Dig Safe facility owners** about your excavation and request locates directly from them. (Municipalities and other government entities that own water, sewer and drainage lines are not required to join Dig Safe.)
 - ☐ 3. **You must pre-mark your dig area** with white paint, flags and/or stakes, so locators can more easily identify utilities to be marked. Dig Safe will not issue your locate ticket until pre-marking is completed. Document your pre-marks with photos or video.
 - ☐ 4. **Keep your ticket number** and compliance documentation handy at the job site.
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- ☐ 5. **If your 811 locate indicates you will be working within 15 feet of a high-pressure natural gas transmission pipeline or other critical utility:** Prior to digging, you must attend an on-site meeting and/or have contact with qualified National Grid representatives. National Grid **MUST** be on-site during the excavation.
 - ☐ 6. **Expect responses from all facility operators** confirming utility presence or absence in your work area. Document the responses. If no response, do not dig; call 811.
 - ☐ 7. **Check the site on your start date** to confirm your entire dig area has been marked. Look for aboveground signs of unmarked utilities, such as meters, pipeline markers, valves, pad-mounted transformers, etc. Also check for signs of something buried after the locate was completed, such as a fresh trench. If you find unmarked facilities, stop digging and notify 811 and the facility operator. Always assume unmarked lines are in use and present a potential danger.
 - ☐ 8. **Begin excavation within 30 days** or your ticket will expire. Request a new ticket if excavation is delayed.
 - ☐ 9. **Maintain the marks.** You are responsible for maintaining locate marks until excavation is complete. Document marks with photos or video. If marks fade or are destroyed, call 811 for a re-mark. Stop work until re-marks are done.
 - ☐ 10. **Respect the tolerance zone.** Do not use mechanical excavation equipment within the “tolerance zone,” which spans the width of a marked utility plus 18 inches from each indicated outside edge. Use **ONLY** hand tools or vacuum technology within this zone.
 - ☐ 11. **Visually verify utility line location and depth** by carefully digging test holes with a blunt hand tool. Approach from the side, not the top, and do not use sharp probes. Find the actual facility, not just tracer wire or warning tape.

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

- ☐ **12. Locate marks may not be accurate.** If you cannot visually verify a marked line within the tolerance zone, stop work and notify 811 or the facility operator.
- ☐ **13. After visual verification,** use reasonable precautions to avoid damaging buried utility lines.
- ☐ **14. If you scrape a gas pipe coating or cut a tracer wire,** call National Grid and 811 immediately. Even seemingly minor damage can cause a line to fail or become unlocatable.
- ☐ **15. Excavate around exposed gas pipes cautiously.** Add support if necessary, using materials that will not damage the pipe or its coating. Backfill with care. Consult National Grid for specific backfill rules.
- ☐ **16. Use special care around cast iron pipelines.** Notify National Grid whenever cast iron gas pipe is exposed or falls within an excavation trench's angle of repose.
- ☐ **17. If your equipment contacts a power line, notify 911 and National Grid immediately.** Move the equipment away from the line if you can do so safely. If the equipment cannot be safely moved, stay put until National Grid utility workers signal you off. Warn others to stay far away; anyone who touches the line, the equipment or even the ground nearby may be injured or killed.
 - **If fire forces you off,** jump clear without touching the equipment and the ground at the same time. Land with your feet together and shuffle away with small steps, keeping both feet together and on the ground at all times. Once clear, do not return to the equipment until National Grid has declared it safe.
- ☐ **18. If you contact a natural gas pipeline and/or suspect a gas leak,** warn others, leave the area quickly and stay away until utility personnel say it is safe to return. Do NOT use matches, lighters, cigarettes, vape pens or anything electrical – not even a light switch, phone or garage door opener. A spark from any of these items could ignite leaking gas, causing a fire or explosion. Leave the excavation open and do not attempt to stop the flow of gas. From a safe location, call 911 and National Grid immediately. (Excavators are required by law to call 911 if gas is escaping.) Report the incident to your supervisor.

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

In case of gas emergencies:

911 and 1-800-233-5325

In case of electric emergencies:

911 and 1-800-465-1212

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



Know what's below.
811 before you dig.



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at **ngridssafety.com/utility-safety-course**.

This is an important notice. Please have it translated.

Este é um aviso importante. Quiera mandá-lo traduzir.
Este es un aviso importante. Sirvase mandarlo traducir.
Avis important. Veuillez traduire immédiatement.
Questa è un'informazione importante, si prega di tradurla.

Это очень важное сообщение. Пожалуйста, попросите чтобы вам его перевели.
Đây là một thông báo quan trọng. Xin vui lòng dịch thông báo này.
這是一個重要的通知。請翻譯一下。

זהו אזהרה חשובה. אנא תרגמו אותה.
এটি একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বজ্ঞপ্তি। অনুগ্রহ করে এটি অনুবাদ করে নিন।
Sa a se yon avi enpòtan. Tanpri, fè li tradwi.
טעזערעביא עטיב. גאזנא עקיטכיוו א זיא סאד