

Tips of the trade



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!



Order our **FREE** worker safety kit on the National Grid e-SMARTworkers website.

[Order kit](#)

Maintain proper safety clearance distances

Locate marks are not precisely accurate and never indicate depth. Before you can power dig within a specified distance of a marked utility line (18 inches from each indicated outside edge of the line in Massachusetts; 24 inches in New York*), you must first verify the line's exact location and depth by hand-digging test holes, or "potholes."

**In New York, after verification you may not power dig closer than 4 inches in any direction from the designated or known outside diameter of a natural gas pipeline unless National Grid agrees to this in writing.*

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, explosions, 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!

Would you like to know more?

Additional utility safety tips, case studies, instructional videos and educational tools can all be found, at no charge to you, on National Grid's [contractor safety website](#).

For more contractor safety information, visit ngridssafety.com.

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

Smell Gas. Act Fast.



Know what's below.
811 before you dig.

In case of gas emergencies:

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

Metro New York:
911 and 1-718-643-4050

Upstate New York:
911 and 1-800-892-2345

Massachusetts:
911 and 1-800-233-5325

In case of electric emergencies:

Upstate New York:
911 and 1-800-867-5222

Massachusetts:
911 and 1-800-465-1212