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PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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April is National Safe Digging Month
Maryland PSC Urges Citizens to Call 811 before Digging

(Baltimore)—The Maryland Public Service Commission recognizes April as National Safe Digging Month. As the weather turns warmer, the Commission advises all citizens to call 811 before beginning any spring outdoor projects.

Nearly half of American homeowners who plan to dig this year for projects such as landscaping, installing a fence or building a deck, will put themselves and communities at risk by not calling 811 to learn the approximate location of underground utilities, according to the Common Ground Alliance (CGA). The CGA is dedicated to protecting underground utility lines and the safety of people who dig near them.

Digging without knowing the approximate location of underground utilities can result in damage to gas, electric, communications, water and sewer lines, which can lead to service disruptions, serious injuries and costly repairs.

“Taking a simple precaution such as dialing 811 before starting these projects can prevent injuries and damage to underground lines,” says Commission Chairman W. Kevin Hughes.

Everyone who calls 811 a few days before digging is connected to a local one call notification center that will take the caller’s information and communicate it to local utility companies. Professional locators will then visit the dig site to mark the approximate location of underground utility lines with spray paint, flags or both. Once a site has been accurately marked, it is safe to begin digging around the marked areas.

As part of National Safe Digging Month, The Commission encourages homeowners to take the following steps when planning a digging project this spring:

- Always call 811 a few days before digging, regardless of the depth or familiarity with the property.
- Plan ahead. Call on Monday or Tuesday for work planned for an upcoming weekend, providing ample time for the approximate location of lines to be marked.
- Confirm with 811 that all lines have been marked.
- Learn what the various colors of paint and flags represent at www.call811.com/faqs.
- Consider moving the location of your project if it is near utility line markings.
- If a contractor has been hired, confirm that a call to 811 has been made. Do not allow work to begin if the lines are not marked.

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