



# ENERGY CONNECTIONS

MARCH 2014 / MONTANA



## How 811 works

Want to avoid spending a day in the dark? It's as simple as 8-1-1.

Call 811 from anywhere in the country a few days prior to digging, and your call will be routed to your local One Call Center. Tell the operator where you're planning to dig, what type of work you will be doing and your affected local utilities companies will be notified about your intent to dig. In Montana, the locator has two business days to mark the approximate location of your underground lines, pipes and cables, so you'll know what's below - and are able to dig safely.

This includes:

- Planting a tree
- Building a fence
- Burying a pet
- Digging a foundation
- Trenching
- Digging a ditch

For more information, visit [montana 811.com](http://montana811.com) or if you live in the Flathead area visit [montana811.org](http://montana811.org).



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

## The Call

When considering what you'll need to make your project a success, don't forget the most important first step for any outdoor home improvement project: calling 811 before you dig.

As any professional will tell you, smart digging always means calling 811 before every job.

Homeowners often make risky assumptions about whether or not they should get their utility lines marked, but every digging job requires a call - even "small" projects like planting trees and shrubs. If you are a homeowner hiring an excavator, the excavator is required to request locates.

When you call before you dig, you'll prevent unintended consequences such as injury to you or your family, damage to your property, utility service outages to the entire neighborhood and potential fines and repair costs.

After all, do you really want to be the person who knocks out the neighborhood's cable service during the big game?

### Reminder: It's the Law

State law requires you to call to have any underground facilities marked at least two business days prior to all digging. By not calling, you can be faced with expensive fines and repair costs. Don't gamble with your safety - know what's below. Always call before you dig.



## The Wait



Good job - you've taken the first step toward safe digging and made a call to 811!

But wait, what happens next?

Well, since your call was routed to your state one call center, locate crews from member utility companies have found out exactly where you are planning to dig and are on their way to mark where those hidden underground utility lines are under your lawn!

To assist locaters, you should mark the dig area with white paint or stakes.

Most locate crews will arrive to mark your property within two business days, and will make sure you know exactly where to dig - even though the depths of utility lines may vary and there may be multiple utility lines in the same area.

So kick back and relax, knowing your call made a safe digging project possible.

Now's your chance to take a deep breath before beginning that project. Catch a movie, read a good book, walk the dog, or take a trip to your local home improvement store and get everything you'll need for your project - just don't dig until your yard is marked, of course!

**NorthWestern**  
**Energy**  
*Delivering a Bright Future*

# Safe Digging

Well you called before digging, waited for your lines to be marked, and now it's time to roll up your sleeves and get to work!

By now locator crews, possibly from multiple companies, have been to your property and made sure to mark the approximate location of your underground utility lines. Check the area before proceeding with your project. **The One Call service is free.** Some underground lines on private property are privately-owned and may not be marked by a utility. Other underground lines, between a meter and the home or business, may be considered privately-owned. In these cases a charge by the utility may apply to locate and mark those lines.

When digging, make sure to always dig around the marks, not on them. Some utility lines may be buried at a shallow depth, and an unintended shovel thrust can bring you right back to square one - facing potentially dangerous and/or costly consequences. The tolerance zone in Montana is 18 inches on both sides of the marks.

If you expose gas or electric lines that haven't been marked, or damage a line, stop excavating and call NorthWestern Energy immediately. Damage to a pipe that results in the release of gas, the excavator should call 911 immediately.

Don't forget that with time, erosion or root structure growth may shift the locations of your utility lines, so remember to call, each time you are planning a digging project. And help spread the word – make sure your friends and neighbors know the importance of calling 811.

## Utility line color coding The color of the paint, stake or other marker indicates what's below:

	<b>Proposed Excavation</b>
	<b>Temporary Survey Markings</b>
	<b>Electric</b>
	<b>Gas / Oil</b>
	<b>Communications / Cable TV</b>
	<b>Water</b>
	<b>Reclaimed Water</b>
	<b>Sewer</b>

# It's Pipeline Inspection Season

To ensure the safety and integrity of all our natural gas pipelines, NorthWestern Energy employees and contractors will be in your area throughout the next couple of months performing physical checks of all pipelines and related equipment.

There should be no interruption of service resulting from the inspection, and should we need to access your property, you will be notified. Inspectors wear clothing that clearly identifies them and carry identification that can be presented as requested. Thank you for supporting us as we work to keep our communities safe.



# DSIP Work Continues

As a NorthWestern Energy customer, you expect and deserve top quality at a reasonable cost – in other words, great value. NorthWestern Energy has one of the most reliable electric and natural gas distribution systems in the country, and we want to keep it that way. That's why in 2011 we launched the multi-year Distribution System Infrastructure Project (DSIP) to maintain and invest in future reliability through targeted equipment replacements and system improvements.

NorthWestern Energy is fortunate that it has the time to deal with aging infrastructure correctly. At the same time, new technologies are emerging that promise to offer many future benefits. A modern, adaptable infrastructure will be a prerequisite for seizing those opportunities, and we have the obligation to ensure that our system is ready to accept new, proven and cost-effective technologies as they become available to help support our customer needs and Montana's economic foundation.

We believe the maintenance and investment of our electric and natural gas distribution facilities is the right thing to do, and now is the right time to do it. NorthWestern plans to spend nearly \$52 million on DSIP projects across Montana this year. The work employs about 300 skilled contract employees along with NorthWestern crews.

Further details on the project can be found at [NorthWesternEnergy.com](http://NorthWesternEnergy.com).

## Contact us...

### MONTANA

Customer Contact Center (888) 467-2669

7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F

Emergency 24/7 Service

Call Before You Dig 811

Energy Efficiency (800) 823-5995

### NEBRASKA

Customer Contact Center (800) 245-6977

7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F

Emergency 24/7 Service

Call Before You Dig 811

### SOUTH DAKOTA

Customer Contact Center (800) 245-6977

7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F

Emergency 24/7 Service

Call Before You Dig 811

### PAYMENT

Automated Phone

Payment Option: (800) 218-4959

(via checking, savings, or money market account)

SpeedPay Automated

Phone Payment Option: (877) 361-4927

(via credit card account)

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