

Call Before You Dig: It's the Law!

Planning a dig?

The "Call Before You Dig" law, RCW 19.122 requires anyone digging into the ground to call 811 at least two business days before they start digging to request a FREE underground utility locate.

What trouble can I dig into?

Dig without calling two days in advance:
Pay \$1,000 fine
Pay \$5,000 fine for additional violations

Dig without calling and damage a utility:
Pay above fine(s) and triple the repair costs

Dig without calling 35ft from a large pipeline:
Be found guilty of a misdemeanor

Damage a large pipeline without calling:
Pay \$10,000 fine, and
be found guilty of a misdemeanor



Consumer Guide Call Before You Dig

W A S H I N G T O N



UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

Consumer Help Line
1-888-333-WUTC (9882)

PO Box 47250
1300 S Evergreen Park Drive SW
Olympia, WA 98504

(360) 664-1160
(360) 586-1150 Fax
consumer@utc.wa.gov
www.utc.wa.gov/callbeforeyoudig

W A S H I N G T O N



One Call To Protect It All

Underground systems that carry essential services such as natural gas, electricity, water and telecommunications are vulnerable to damage if struck by a shovel.

The law requires you to call 811 and request an underground utility locate at least two business days before you plan to dig.

Protect your life and the lives of those around you, and request a locate.



Make the Call

You can have underground utilities located, for FREE, with one quick call to 811 or visit www.callbeforeyoudig.org.

You must outline your proposed dig area in white paint prior to making the call.

During the call you will be asked for the address where the work is taking place; a description of the work being done; the area where the utility lines need to be located, and if it is outlined in white paint; the township, section and range if known; and the date the work will be taking place. At the end of your call, you will be given a ticket number for your locate request—keep this number. The utility companies that could have lines impacted by your work will be notified by the call center.

Color Codes

The utilities will be identified by painted marks or flags within 24 inches on either side of the utility line.

	Electric
	Gas
	Cable TV, Telephone
	Drinking Water
	Sewer
	Non-Drinking Water
	Survey Marks
	Excavator Marks

Maintaining the Marks

Once the utilities are marked, it is your responsibility to maintain those marks for 45 days, or the life of the project, whichever is shortest. After 45 days, your locate marks will expire and you will need to call for another locate.

Pipeline Damage

If you strike a pipeline, immediately notify the pipeline operator and 811, even if the damage seems minor, such as a small scrape or dent. Seemingly insignificant damage to the pipe's protective coating can lead to serious problems later.

Recognizing a Leak

Natural gas is a colorless, odorless substance. Because natural gas cannot be detected on its own, an odorant is added to help consumers smell gas. These signs may also indicate a natural gas leak: a hissing sound; dust, water or vegetation blowing around pipeline; or discolored or dead vegetation around pipeline.

Report a Problem

If you encounter a problem with a utility locate, the commission can assist you. If your locate doesn't happen, is late, inadequate, or inaccurate—please call the commission toll free at 1-888-333-WUTC (9882).

