

New Mexico Gas Company Urges Customers to Call 811 Before Digging

(ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.) – It's National Safe Digging Month, and New Mexico Gas Company is urging customers planning to do any digging this spring to keep themselves, their families and their neighbors safe by calling 811 before they dig.

A single call to the New Mexico One Call service – by dialing 811 anywhere in the state two days before starting a digging project – will prompt utilities to come out and mark the location of underground natural gas, electric, telephone, cable, water and sewer lines so that homeowners and commercial excavators can avoid damaging the lines while digging.

The service is free of charge – and calling before digging is required by state law.

“Homeowners and excavators sometimes make risky assumptions about whether or not they should get utility lines marked, but every digging project requires a call — even small projects like planting trees and shrubs,” said Ed Kacer, NMGC vice president of operations and engineering. “Calling 811 before every digging project ensures that underground utility lines get properly marked, which in turn helps prevent damage to underground utilities.”

Damaging underground utilities can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, cause bodily harm or death and potentially result in fines and repair costs, Kacer said.

The New Mexico 811 service is available to take line-spot requests by phone from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays, except observed holidays. Emergency line spots may be called in 24 hours a day to 866-344-6662. Customers may also request a line spot by facsimile to 800-727-8809 or online at NMOneCall.org. Requests made online or by facsimile after 4 p.m. will be processed the following business day.

Kacer said that customers who damage a gas line while digging should not attempt a repair themselves but should instead call NMGC at 888-NM-GAS-CO (888-664-2726) for an emergency response 24 hours a day. Even a dent in a pipe can cause a future rupture or leak.

The primary signs that a gas line has been hit include an unusual hissing sound, a rotten egg smell, blowing dirt, dead or discolored vegetation in an otherwise green area, or bubbling in wet or flooded areas.