

For Immediate Release

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Safe Digging Month!

Montpelier, Vermont – With the warm weather approaching, Vermonters will be undertaking a wide variety of construction and home improvement jobs while weather permits! This is the perfect opportunity to remember that safety is as important below the ground as it is above.

People who plan to undertake projects involving digging are strongly encouraged to protect themselves by locating lines and pipes before breaking ground. Both federal and state laws require drilling contractors and other excavators to notify appropriate utility companies before beginning work. "Dig Safe®" and "Call Before You Dig" are required by these laws and services funded by member companies--which allow notification of the appropriate utilities with one telephone call. These were created to promote public safety, avoid costly damage to underground facilities, and reduce cost and time of notifications. Last year, the initiative was expanded to include a national telephone number, "811".

As part of the Dig Safe® program, the Public Service Department works with utilities to promote safe digging and to investigate complaints of Dig Safe violations throughout the state. "While there is always a risk of someone digging and striking a power line, the majority of problems last year resulted in cuts to telephone lines. Considering that telephones are the most common means of calling for help in an emergency or conducting business, line cuts can have important consequences", said GC Morris, DPS Gas Utility Engineer.

Did you know?

- One utility line is unintentionally hit every minute in the U.S.
- 40% of all U.S. digging damages result from not calling before digging.
- Utilities can be buried only a few inches underground, making them easy to strike even during shallow digging projects.

Vermont law requires individuals to notify Dig Safe® at least 48 hours before excavation on public and private property, rights of way and easements. Vermonters may call Dig Safe® toll-free at 1-888-DIG-SAFE, or dial "811".

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