

# NEWS RELEASE

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## SAFE DIGGING DAY REMINDS OREGONIANS ABOUT IMPORTANCE OF FREE 811 SERVICE

This Friday, August 11, is National Safe Digging Day – also known as National 811 Day. The annual observance exists to raise awareness about contacting 811 before beginning a digging or excavation project. The Oregon Utility Notification Center, which oversees the statewide call or click before you dig program, and the Oregon Public Utility Commission are reminding Oregonians that using the free service can save money and lives.

“Everyone knows to call 911 in case of emergency, but not everyone knows to contact 811 before digging so they won’t have to call 911 later,” said Josh Thomas, Executive Director of the Oregon Utility Notification Center. “By planning ahead and requesting a utility locate, you can prevent service interruptions, costly repairs, environmental damage, injuries, and worse.”

According to the Common Ground Alliance, nearly two out of five U.S. homeowners dig without requesting the free 811 locate service beforehand, and the estimated annual cost of damages to underground utilities nationally is \$30 billion. To protect critical infrastructure and ensure public safety, the Oregon Legislature created the Oregon Utility Notification Center back in 1995.

Today, Oregon’s statewide notification center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and free of charge for homeowners, contractors, and professional excavators. Requests for utility locates must be made two business days before a project but not more than 10 days in advance. Dig sites are then marked with color-coded spray paint to avoid hitting underground pipes and wires.

“It’s the next best thing to having x-ray vision,” said Thomas. “When it comes to construction and home improvement projects, whether the job is large or small, it always pays to know what’s below.”

For more information about the Oregon Utility Notification Center or the statewide Oregon 811 system, go to [Oregon811.com](http://Oregon811.com).

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*In 1995, the Oregon Legislature created the **Oregon Utility Notification Center (OUNC)** to establish a statewide notification system to protect contractors, the general public and buried utilities from damages or injuries caused by excavation activities (ORS 757.547). The free service ensures that operators of underground facilities are notified of proposed excavation so the utilities can be located and marked in advance. For more information about the OUNC or the statewide notification system, go to [Oregon811.com](http://Oregon811.com).*

*The **Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC)** regulates customer rates and services of the state’s investor-owned electric and natural gas utilities. The PUC also regulates landline telephone providers and select water companies. The PUC’s mission is to ensure Oregonians have access to safe, reliable, and fairly priced utility services that advance state policy and promote the public interest. We use an inclusive process to evaluate differing viewpoints and visions of the public interest and arrive at balanced, well-reasoned, independent decisions supported by fact and law. For more information about the PUC, visit [oregon.gov/puc](http://oregon.gov/puc).*