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## Contact Georgia 811 Before You Dig - How it Works

811 is the national number to call before any digging project, large or small, and in Georgia, 811 can even be conveniently reached online. Georgia 811's comprehensive notification and education services exist to prevent utility line interruption and damage as well as personal injury before a dig begins.

Contacting Georgia 811 starts a critical process that should precede any outdoor digging project. It may appear obvious to notify 811 before a large scale undertaking, but many homeowners are unaware that even seemingly small projects that break ground still require notification.

Nearly 1,300 damages are reported to Georgia 811 each month. Damage to underground lines can result in service interruptions, costly repair bills and fines. Hitting a line can be even more disastrous, potentially causing serious harm to the digger and other individuals. Small weekend projects such as planting trees or shrubbery, installing a mailbox or sprinkler system can quickly become a significant problem if the digger does not inform Georgia 811 beforehand. Georgia 811 is a free service, and the process is simple: contact, wait, then safely dig.

The homeowner or excavator would first contact Georgia 811 online at [www.Georgia811.com](http://www.Georgia811.com) or by phone by dialing 8-1-1 at least three business days prior to the start of their digging project. After using either method to contact Georgia 811, the wait begins and the homeowner or excavator will get a ticket number for tracking in PRIS (Positive Response Information System). PRIS is the system used to track and update locate requests through [www.Georgia811.com](http://www.Georgia811.com) or the Georgia 811 app. At this point Georgia 811 will notify the affected member utility companies of the intent to dig. On average, seven utility member companies are notified. These companies then send professional locate technicians to identify and mark the approximate locations of underground lines with colored paint or flags. A color guide for the different types of utility flags and markings is available at <http://georgia811.com/index.php/have-my-lines-been-marked/>.

Once all member utility companies have responded to PRIS, the homeowner or excavator may begin safely digging. The digger should respect the flags and markings by making sure to always dig around them. Hand tools can be used to expose existing utilities. No mechanized digging is allowed within 18 inches of the outer edge of an existing utility. Additionally, some utility lines may not be far beneath the surface, so allowing adequate room and steering clear of the marked areas is key.

Contacting Georgia 811 at least three days before breaking ground is simple, free and ensures peace of mind during a project. Digging safely is the final step in the 811 process, but diggers should contact 811 during the planning stages of any future projects that require digging. Over time, root system changes and erosion can shift utility line locations, so it's important to contact Georgia 811 every time.

For more information on Georgia's "Dig Law", the Georgia Facilities Protection Act, visit the Georgia Public Service Commission's web site at [psc.state.ga.us/](http://psc.state.ga.us/). Georgia 811 can be reached with any process related questions by dialing 811 or emailing [WebServices@georgia811.com](mailto:WebServices@georgia811.com).

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