

PRESS RELEASE
ALABAMA
Public Service Commission



For Immediate Release
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**April Is National Safe Digging Month:
PSC Urges Alabamians To “Know What Is Below”**

Montgomery, Alabama – Today, the Alabama Public Service Commission (PSC) announced that April is **National 811 Safe Digging Month**. The national observance brings awareness to the importance of knowing “what is below” prior to beginning any type of excavation project. Supporting the effort, Governor Robert Bentley will sign a proclamation designating April 17th as “*Alabama Safe Digging Day*” at the State Capital.

Approximately once every three minutes, utility lines are damaged by some form of digging. Many of these incidents are caused by the failure of the professional excavator or homeowner to call 811 before beginning their excavation project. In view of a growing number of gas pipeline accidents across the country, no precaution to secure the safety of gas lines is too small.

As we enter the Spring and Summer season, many Alabamians are tending flower beds, landscaping and undertaking other outdoor digging projects. Failure to take precautions before starting what is viewed as an innocent digging project can ultimately result in severe and dangerous consequences due to damaged gas lines. Before taking on any digging project in your yard, place of business or the street, Alabamians are cautioned to mark the area and call 811 to gain the necessary clearance from the affected utility - whether gas, electric, communications, water or sewer lines.

As part of National Safe Digging Month, Alabamians are encouraged to take the following steps when planning digging projects this season:

- Always call 811 a few days before digging, regardless of the depth or familiarity of the property.
- Plan ahead. Call on Monday or Tuesday for work planned for an upcoming weekend, providing ample time for approximate location of lines to be marked.
- Confirm with your local “one call center” that all lines have been marked.
- Learn what the various colors of paint and flags represent at www.call811.com.
- Consider moving the location of your project if it is near utility line markings.
- If a contractor has been hired, confirm that a call to 811 has been made. Don’t allow work to begin if the lines are not marked.

The PSC’s Gas Pipeline Safety Section can provide information on the importance of gas line safety precautions as well as related federal safety rules. The PSC regulates investor-owned utilities in Alabama, including Alabama Power Company, Alabama Gas Corporation, and Mobile Gas Service Corporation. The PSC also maintains limited jurisdiction over the regulation of telephone providers as well as trucking and railroad operations from a safety standpoint. The current members of the PSC are Twinkle Address Cavanaugh, President; Jeremy Oden, Place 1; and Terry Dunn, Place 2. To learn more about the PSC actions and view our monthly meetings, visit our website at www.psc.alabama.gov.

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