

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ohio Utilities Protection Service
12467 Mahoning Ave.
North Jackson, Ohio 44301

Contact: Lee Richards, 1-800-311-3692 ext. 7249; leer@oups.org

APRIL IS “SAFE DIGGING MONTH” *OHIO 8-1-1 Enhances Safety of Ohioans and Protects State’s Critical Underground Utilities*

North Jackson, OH, April 1, 2019 – April has, once again, been designated “National Safe Digging Month,” providing an opportunity to promote safe digging practices and the calling of “8-1-1” prior to commencing any excavation activities. Governor Mike Dewine has also issued a proclamation for the State of Ohio.

With Spring’s warmer weather, homeowners and contractors across Ohio are anxious to begin their outdoor improvement projects. The Ohio Utilities Protection Service, doing business as OHIO811, reminds everyone to be safe and call 8-1-1 at least 48 hours before you dig. It’s also the law.

“Every six minutes, an underground utility line is damaged because someone decides to dig without first calling 8-1-1,” said Roger Lipscomb, Executive Director of OHIO811. “Having the location of gas lines, electric facilities, fiber optic telecommunications cables, water and sewer infrastructure marked before you dig will help avoid unnecessary risks of serious injury, property damage, and costly utility repairs. Supported by our utility and excavation industry membership, the OHIO811 staff is available 24/7/365 to take your call and help keep Ohio’s 11.7 million citizens safe.”

According to a national survey by the Common Ground Alliance, some of the most popular planned outdoor projects cited among surveyed homeowners include: planting a tree or shrub, building a patio or deck, building a fence or installing a mailbox. **42% of those homeowners surveyed, more than 50 million Americans, stated that they were unlikely to call 8-1-1 beforehand, placing themselves and their communities at risk.** Please take just a few minutes to call 8-1-1 or visit www.OHIO811.org. Knowing where gas, electric and other utilities cross your property will help protect your life, your property and your wallet.

Here are the main things to remember if you plan to dig:

1. Plan your projects in advance.
2. Ohio law requires that you call 8-1-1 or go online to OHIO811.org at least 48 hours and no more than ten days before you plan to dig. The call is free. Providing an accurate address, general location and details of your project provides member utility companies with the information they need to mark their underground infrastructure.

3. Once your property has been marked with flags and colored paint, make sure you avoid and dig **parallel with the utility lines**.
4. Be cautious when you are removing soil. Utility lines can be damaged by shovels just as easily as with powered equipment. **Carefully use smaller hand tools** while digging within 24 inches of the outer edge of the underground utility line markings.
5. Pay close attention for any signs of a natural gas leak. If you smell something similar to **rotten eggs**, or hear **hissing, whistling, or roaring**, leave the area and call 9-1-1 immediately. Take the same action if you hear crackling or think you may have damaged an electric line.
6. If you accidentally damage any utility lines, call 8-1-1.

About OHIO811

A vital resource for Ohio residents and businesses, OHIO811 serves as a communication link between those who have a need to excavate and those who own, operate and/or maintain buried utility facilities within the state of Ohio. OHIO811 promotes "Call Before You Dig" compliance through marketing and educational efforts, including a team of liaisons who are available to conduct safety presentations throughout the state. For more information, please visit www.OHIO811.org