



NEWS RELEASE

STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

MPSC urges homeowners and contractors to postpone nonessential excavation, make free call to 811 before digging

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LANSING, MICH. April is national Safe Digging Month, but this year the annual designation takes on added importance as Michigan and the nation deal with the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on daily life and emergency resources.

The Michigan Public Service Commission urges homeowners and contractors to postpone any non-essential digging until Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's Stay Home, Stay Safe executive order is lifted. [Executive Order 2020-21](#) directs all Michigan businesses and operations to temporarily suspend in-person operations that are not necessary to sustain or protect life and requires residents to limit when they leave their places of residence and to adhere to social distancing.

If a digging project can't wait, the MPSC reminds Michiganders that it's required by law for anyone digging to first call MISS DIG 811 to have underground utilities clearly marked before putting a shovel in the ground. Underground utility lines in Michigan are damaged during digging activities every year, causing service disruptions and putting lives and property at risk.

Using MISS DIG is easy, either through a free call to 811 or by filling out an online request at www.missdig811.org, a few days before starting an excavation project. Trained workers from local utilities, other underground facilities owners and public agencies are dispatched to a job site to mark the locations of underground gas, electric, communications, water or sewer lines using colored flags or spray paint. Do not start an outdoor project until public utility locations are marked, and carefully dig by hand in the designated areas.

While restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic are curtailing business operations, many people who are staying home may be thinking of starting a backyard improvement or other project that requires digging.

"Delaying digging until after the Governor's executive order is lifted is best, but if it can't be put off, it's important to call 811, no matter how small the project," said MPSC Chairman Sally Talberg. "Everything we can do to reduce the risk of people getting injured, or worse, from striking buried infrastructure while digging helps reduce the burden on hospitals working so hard to treat patients impacted by COVID-19."

Another reason to postpone projects that involve digging is that some local governments may be unable to mark buried utilities such as water and sewer lines because of limitations imposed by coronavirus

safety concerns.

“If it’s not essential, please wait until after the executive order is lifted to dig,” said Bruce Campbell, CEO of MISS DIG System, Inc. “If you have to dig, contact MISS DIG 811 first, and then, using your dig ticket, double-check with MISS DIG on its website or by phone to make sure all of the proper marking was done first before you start digging. It’s up to all of us to keep ourselves, our neighbors and underground utilities safe.”

For more information go to www.call811.com or see our [consumer tip on safe digging](#).

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at www.michigan.gov/coronavirus and www.cdc.gov/coronavirus.

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