

News from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission

Matt Skinner, Public Information

Phone: (405) 521-4180 m.skinner@occemail.com

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CALL FIRST, DIG LATER (and safer)

Corporation Commissioners support National Safe Digging Month

April is National Safe Digging Month, and the Oklahoma Corporation Commission is reminding Oklahomans that any outdoor digging project this spring should start with a phone call.

Commission Chairman Dana Murphy says dialing 8-1-1 can save you from a terrible accident.

“There’s more than just earth beneath your feet,” said Murphy. “Oklahoma has thousands of miles of buried pipeline and utility cable. The only way to be sure you won’t hit those lines is to have them located and marked. All you have to do is dial 8-1-1 or 1 (800) 522-OKIE and the OKIE 811 service will take it from there. It doesn’t matter if you’re planning on digging one hole or one hundred, digging without first dialing 8-1-1 or 1-800-522-OKIE puts you and others at risk for serious injury and could result in major damage to critical pipelines and utility service.”

Commission vice Chairman Todd Hiatt warns that even a shallow hole can be dangerous.

“Many people wrongly think that they should only check with OKIE 811 if they are digging a deep hole,” Hiatt said. “You can hit a line even if you’re digging relatively shallow holes, such as those for planting a small tree or a mailbox post. Erosion, soil shifting, and other factors can change how close a line is to the surface.”

Commission Bob Anthony says millions of Americans are putting themselves and others at risk every year.

“A new survey by the Common Ground Alliance finds that more than a third of Americans planning a digging project this spring have no plans to call 8-1-1 to first locate any utility lines or pipelines,” Anthony noted. “Taking the time to call 8-1-1 or 1-800-522-OKIE before you dig can save lives and prevent property damage. It’s time well spent.”

Both 8-1-1 and 1-800-522-OKIE will put the caller in touch with the same free service, which will arrange to have underground lines marked before digging begins. For more information go to www.okie811.org.

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