

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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Safe Digging Month Reminds of Importance of Calling 811

Digging without calling to mark underground utilities is leading cause of damages

Merrillville, Ind. — In recognition of National Safe Digging Month, NIPSCO urges customers not to “dig blind” by calling 811 at least two business days before starting any digging project.

According to data collected by Common Ground Alliance (CGA), the national organization dedicated to protecting underground utility lines and the safety of people who dig near them, an underground utility line is damaged once every six minutes. Last year, NIPSCO recorded approximately 1,000 cases of system damage by a contractor, homeowner or other outside party.

Calling 811 is not only important for your safety, it’s the law. Digging without knowing the approximate location of underground utilities can result in damage to gas, electric, communications, water and sewer lines, which can lead to service disruptions and serious injuries.

In addition to the risk of serious injury, not calling 811 could result in fines up to \$10,000 and the cost to repair any damages.

Safe Digging Month is dedicated to increasing awareness of safe digging practices across the country and promoting the use of 811, the free, national call-before-you-dig phone number. Once a call is made, a professional utility line locator will visit the dig site to mark the approximate location of underground public utility lines with paint or flags.

Whether planting trees, installing a pool or performing any other outdoor digging project, NIPSCO offers the following recommendations for a busy digging season:

- Always call 811 or enter a request online at www.811NOW.com two business days before the start of any digging project.
- Tell neighbors, coworkers, family and friends about 811 if they discuss their plans for an outdoor home improvement project with you.
- Plan ahead—Indiana 811 is always open. Just make sure you call at least two working days in advance of your project start date.
- Avoid starting projects until you’re sure all lines are marked. 811 will read a list of which companies should respond.
- Choose another location on the property for a project if the original planned site is near utility line markings.
- If your excavation is within two feet of any marked facility, only use hand tools or vacuum excavation with extreme caution.

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- If a contractor has been hired, confirm that a call to 811 has been made. Don't allow work to begin if the lines aren't marked.
- After the site has been accurately marked, it is safe to begin digging carefully around the marked areas.

Visit NIPSCO.com/811 for more information about 811.

About NIPSCO: Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO), with headquarters in Merrillville, Indiana, has proudly served the energy needs of northern Indiana for more than 100 years. As Indiana's largest natural gas distribution company and the second-largest electric distribution company, NIPSCO serves approximately 810,000 natural gas and 460,000 electric customers across 32 counties. NIPSCO is part of NiSource's (NYSE: NI) seven regulated utility companies. NiSource is one of the largest fully regulated utility companies in the United States, serving approximately 4 million natural gas and electric customers through its local Columbia Gas and NIPSCO brands. More information about NIPSCO and NiSource is available at NIPSCO.com and NiSource.com.

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