

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Claudia Airey  
NIPSCO Communications  
1-219-647-6379

**Safe Digging Month Stresses Importance of Calling 811 Before You Dig**  
*Pick Up the Phone Before the Shovel*

**Merrillville, Ind.** — In recognition of National Safe Digging Month, NIPSCO urges customers and contractors to call 811 at least two business days prior to starting any digging project.

Calling 811 is not only crucial for your safety and the safety of others — 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.

Last year, NIPSCO reported about 900 instances where diggers struck their gas lines. Of those, 28% occurred because the person digging failed to call 811.

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 trained utility line locator will visit the dig site to mark the approximate location of underground public utility lines with paint or flags.

Whether you're installing a mailbox, planting trees or performing any other outdoor digging project, NIPSCO encourages you to take the following steps:

- Always call 811 or enter a request online at [www.811NOW.com](http://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 business days in advance of your project start date.
- Avoid starting projects until you're sure all lines have been marked. When you call 811, you will hear a list of companies that 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.
- If you have hired a contractor to complete your project, confirm that he or she has made a call to 811 before doing any digging. 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.

NIPSCO utilizes two outside companies to assist with marking underground facilities for customers — Utiliquest and Consolidated Infrastructure Group, LLC (CIG). Thanks to an enhanced offering, NIPSCO customers will now receive an electronic confirmation that their requested project area has been located.

Visit [NIPSCO.com/811](http://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 835,000 natural gas and 473,000 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](http://NIPSCO.com) and [NiSource.com](http://NiSource.com).*

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