



NARUC
National Association of Regulatory
Utility Commissioners

For Immediate Release

Contact: Regina Davis, rdavis@naruc.org

NARUC Urges Everyone to Help Flatten the Curve during Safe Digging Month
All Outdoor Home & Commercial Projects Start by Dialing 811

WASHINGTON (April 1, 2020) — Each year, the month of April is designated as Safe Digging Month and this year, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners wants to underscore the need for caution with any outdoor project, particularly in light of the coronavirus pandemic and has issued the following statements:

“As many Americans find themselves at home because of COVID-19, some may feel inclined to work outdoors and engage in home projects. We urge anyone involved in home or business activities outdoors to exercise extreme caution. Not only can costly damage occur after hitting underground gas, electric, communications, water and sewer lines, such accidents can also pose serious health risks. Hospitals, first responders and utility personnel are currently overburdened and cannot afford additional strains on their resources. NARUC urges everyone to practice safe distancing while working outside and to dial 811 before commencing any project that involves digging to avoid physical injuries and property damage. This is another safety measure to help flatten the curve.”

— *NARUC President Brandon Presley*
Commissioner, Mississippi Public Service Commission

“Along with the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, state utility commissioners oversee millions of miles of underground pipelines across the country. It’s our duty to raise public awareness concerning the need to adhere to safety precautions for underground digging and the potential dangers associated with hitting buried gas, electric, communications, water and sewer lines. NARUC advises the public and commercial workers to reach out to their state’s 811 One–Call service several days before starting any excavation or digging project. To help ensure the safety of our communities, it is critically important to call 811 before digging to avoid service disruptions, serious injuries and costly repairs.”

— *Commissioner Diane X. Burman, New York State Public Service Commission*
Chair, NARUC Committee on Gas

NARUC and many state public service commissions will continue to raise awareness on the need for safe digging practices throughout the month.

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About NARUC

NARUC is a non-profit organization founded in 1889 whose members include the governmental agencies that are engaged in the regulation of utilities and carriers in the fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. NARUC's member agencies regulate telecommunications, energy, and water utilities. NARUC represents the interests of state public utility commissions before the three branches of the federal government.