



A l w a y s c a l l 8 1 1 b e f o r e y o u d i g

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LOCAL, FEDERAL LAW REQUIRES CALL TO 911 WHEN PIPELINE DAMAGED

Sunshine 811 provides tools to reduce likelihood of damages and max federal fines up to \$2 million

DEBARY, FL, (June 21, 2017) – Effective July 1, 2017, Florida excavators will be required to call 911 to report any contact with an underground facility that results in the release of a natural gas or other hazardous material or substance regulated by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) of the United States Department of Transportation.

The 911 provision was one of five specific amendments to the Underground Facility Damage Prevention and Safety Act, Chapter 556, Florida Statutes, signed into law by Gov. Scott June 14, 2017.

“You’re still required to stop excavation or demolition activities that may further damage the underground facility until the repair is complete,” explains Sunshine 811 Executive Director Mark Sweet. “It also does not change the existing requirement to notify member utilities immediately when you contact or damage a pipe, cable or its protective covering.”

Protect yourself

Avoid damaging underground facilities by always notifying 811 before you dig to request locate marks and then following the special procedures for High Priority Subsurface Installations (HPSI).

These are underground transmission or distribution pipelines used to transport any gas, refined petroleum product or hazardous/highly volatile liquid such as anhydrous ammonia or carbon dioxide that are deemed critical and identified as HPSI by the facility operator.

Check the Sunshine 811 Positive Response System early and when you’re at the job site. Access it at sunshine811.com.

When you see positive response code 2C: “Marked with Exceptions – High Priority subsurface installations in conflict” this is what you need to know:

1. The pipeline operator has determined that your proposed dig site is within 15 feet of their HPSI pipeline. They know what they’re talking about!
2. ***You MUST contact the pipeline operator/member utility with the start date and time for the excavation or demolition so that they may be present during the excavation. This is important and required by Florida law.***

Protect your business

Damaging pipelines carries its own set of risks. But now, PHMSA may place maximum civil penalties of \$209,002 per violation per day with a maximum of \$2,090,022 for any related series of violations on any Florida excavators who damage their regulated pipelines.

PHMSA has developed a Federal Standard for Excavators (49 CFR Part 196) consisting of six elements that mirror what we teach online and during in-person sessions:

1. Call 811 before digging.
2. Wait for pipelines to be marked.
3. Dig with proper regard for the marks and take steps to avoid digging damage.
4. Use one-call as necessary.
5. Report any contact with pipelines to operator at earliest practical time.
6. Call 911 if there is a release.

Persistence counts even when you don’t get the 2C code

All jobs should be visually inspected before digging. That means compare the codes on your positive response summary to what you see in the field. Look for pipeline and other buried permanent utility markers. These could be a sign that there may be more at your jobsite than you think. If something doesn’t look right, contact 811 or the utility. Remember, your safety and \$2 million are on the line!