

News Release

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Always Call 811 Before You Dig! Then Take CARE Working Near Underground Natural Gas Utility Lines

CHESTER, VA. – August 11, 2010 – Damages to nearly thirty-seven percent of underground utility lines are caused by professional excavators and homeowners failing to call Miss Utility at 811 before digging. This failure to follow Virginia law can create undesired consequences that could include the interruption of utility service, damage to the environment, personal injury or even death.

Today is 8/11 and it serves as a good reminder that four simple free easy steps can protect against property damage and personal injury. In Virginia, the law requires any person planning to excavate or dig to always call Miss Utility at 811 and request underground utility locates. Each utility will locate their underground utilities and clearly mark their service using the universal color code. The colors are:

Red – Electric; **Orange** – Communications, Telephone/CATV; **Blue** – Potable Water; **Green** – Sewer/Drainage; **Yellow** – Gas/Petroleum Pipe Line; **Purple** – Reclaimed Water and **White** – Premark site of intended excavation

“Calling 811 before digging is the most important step in personal and public safety,” said Dan Cote, general manager for Columbia Gas of Virginia. “It is critical for every person – professional excavators and homeowners - to take CARE when planning to dig.”

Follow these four simple steps before you dig or excavate:

1. **Call 811 before you dig**
 - a. Once you call, the member utilities are alerted that may have facilities in your proposed excavation area. There is no fee for this service.
2. **Allow required time for marking**
 - a. Wait 48 hours, beginning 7:00 a.m. the next working day following notice, to allow the utilities to mark their facilities.

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3. Respect the marks

- a. Protect and preserve the line-location markings from the time the excavation or demolition begins until they are no longer required for the proper and safe excavation near the utility lines
- b. Request remarking at anytime the markings become illegible for any reason

4. Excavate carefully

- a. Conduct a site survey before beginning your project. Look for clear evidence of unmarked utilities. Clear evidence includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - i. Visual evidence of an unmarked utility line
 - ii. Knowledge of the presence of a utility line; or
 - iii. Faded marks from previous markings
- b. If clear evidence of an unmarked utility line is identified, contact Miss Utility and notify them. Wait three hours from the time you notified Miss Utility before proceeding.
- c. Once the underground utility is located, the law requires that the excavator take all reasonable steps to properly protect, support and backfill underground utility lines. Also, an excavator must not use mechanized equipment within two feet of the extremities of all exposed utility lines.

About Columbia Gas of Virginia

Columbia Gas of Virginia, with headquarters in Chesterfield County, is one of the 9 energy distribution companies of NiSource Inc. (NYSE: NI). Columbia Gas of Virginia serves nearly 240,000 customers in portions of Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads, suburban Richmond, Central Virginia, and the Shenandoah Valley, the Lynchburg region and parts of Western Virginia. NiSource distribution companies serve 3.8 million gas and electric customers primarily in nine states. More information about Columbia Gas of Virginia and WarmWise is available at www.columbiagasva.com.

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