



Winter Storm Kit

Call 811 Before Digging

Summary

After a major storm, communities start work to repair damage, clean up debris and remove fallen trees. Some of this work could require digging or stump grinding, and PG&E urges customers and contractors to call 811 before any digging project, no matter how large or small.

Every three minutes nationwide, an underground utility line is damaged during a digging project. These accidents can happen in a homeowner's backyard, not just on heavy construction projects. Following a major storm, any digging work around the house to remove or replant trees, or to repair decks and fences requires a call to 811.

A call to 811 connects homeowners and contractors to Underground Service Alert (USA), a free service that notifies utility companies about excavation projects. The utilities then dispatch professional locators to the digging site to mark the location of underground lines with flags, spray paint or both.

Tips for Calling 811:

- Call 811 at least two working days before and up to 14 days in advance of an excavation.
- Customers will receive a list of notified utilities that may have underground lines in the area. If you believe a utility may not have marked their lines, call 811 again to notify USA.
- On paved surfaces, mark the proposed excavation area with white, chalk-based paint. Homeowners can also use other white substances such as sugar or flour.
- On unpaved surfaces, use white flags or stakes to mark the proposed excavation area.
- Use hand tools to carefully excavate within 24 inches on either side of a utility-marked facility.
- Be careful not to erase utility marks while working. If you cannot see the markings, call 811 and request a remarking.
- 811 requests are active for 28 days. Notify USA if work continues beyond that time.
- Immediately notify utilities about any type of contact or damage to its wires or pipes.
- If there is any type of damage to PG&E electric wires or gas pipelines, or if there is a possible gas leak, take these steps:
 - Move to a safe location
 - Call 911
 - Call PG&E at 1-800-743-5000

For more information on 811, please watch the following Currents video:
<http://www.pgecurrents.com/2013/10/11/video-a-contractor-talks-about-why-he-didn%E2%80%99t-used-to-call-811-and-why-he-does-now/>