



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# ***Survey reveals 34.9 million Americans plan to dig without contacting 811 first, risking disruption to critical services***

*Colorado 811 calls on homeowners to contact 811 before beginning projects that require digging – including gardening, building a fence or installing a mailbox – to prevent damage to essential underground utilities and keep communities safe*

**Denver, CO (March 31, 2022)** – In observance of National Safe Digging Month in April, [Colorado 811](#) today announced results from a recent national survey revealing that **nearly six-in-ten U.S. homeowners (58%) reported experiencing a utility service interruption during the last 12 months.** In addition, 49% of U.S. homeowners who plan to dig this year **will put themselves and their communities at risk by digging without contacting 811 beforehand** to learn the approximate location of underground utilities.

Digging without knowing the approximate location of underground utilities can result in serious injuries, inconvenient service disruptions and costly repairs when gas, electric, communications, water and sewer lines are damaged. Making a free request to 811 online or over the phone before digging will help homeowners maintain essential utility service for themselves and neighbors and keep communities safe, by reducing the likelihood of accidentally digging into buried utility lines.

“Almost half of U.S. homeowners – nearly 34.9 million Americans – who are planning to dig on their property this year are also putting themselves at risk of utility service interruptions and personal injury by not contacting Colorado 811 at least three business days in advance,” said Marty Mead, Colorado 811 Director of Damage. “It is important that anyone who plans to put a shovel in the ground contacts CO811 beforehand to have the utilities marked, so they can safely dig away from buried lines.”

The national public opinion survey of homeowners conducted in early March by the [Common Ground Alliance \(CGA\)](#), the national association dedicated to protecting underground utility lines, people who dig near them, and their communities, revealed that 58% of American homeowners personally plan to complete a home improvement project involving digging in the next 12 months – and unfortunately, 49% of them, or approximately 34.9 million Americans, will take a risk by not contacting 811 beforehand. The most popular planned projects cited among surveyed homeowners who plan to dig include:

- **Planting a tree or shrub: 80%**
- Building a fence: 25%

- Building a deck or patio: 21%
- Installing a mailbox: 11%
- Installing a pool: 3%
- Something else: 19%

As part of National Safe Digging Month, Colorado 811 encourages homeowners to take the following steps when planning a digging project this spring:

- Always contact 811 at least three business days before digging, regardless of the depth or familiarity with the property. You can do this by visiting [www.colorado811.org/idig811](http://www.colorado811.org/idig811)
- Plan ahead. Make an 811 locate request on Monday or Tuesday for work planned for an upcoming weekend, providing ample time for the approximate location of lines to be marked.
- Confirm that all lines have been marked.
- If a contractor has been hired, confirm that the contractor has contacted 811. Don't allow work to begin if the lines aren't marked.
- Visit [www.colorado811.org](http://www.colorado811.org) for complete information.

Everyone who contacts 811 a few days before digging is connected to a local one call notification center that will take the caller's information and communicate it to local utility companies. Professional locators will then visit the dig site to mark the approximate location of underground utility lines with spray paint, flags or both. Once a site has been accurately marked, it is safe to begin digging around the marked areas.

#### **About Colorado 811**

*Colorado 811 is the communication link between anyone planning to dig and underground utility owners in the state of Colorado. Colorado 811's goal is to promote public safety and the protection of underground utilities, while keeping all Coloradans safe. CO811 does not perform any type of locating services. For more information about Colorado 811, visit [www.colorado811.org](http://www.colorado811.org).*

#### **About CGA**

*CGA is a member-driven association of nearly 1,800 individuals, organizations and sponsors in every facet of the underground utility industry. CGA has established itself as the preeminent source of damage prevention data and information in an effort to reduce damages to underground facilities in North America through shared responsibility among all stakeholders. Visit [www.commongroundalliance.com](http://www.commongroundalliance.com) to learn more.*

#### **About the study**

*SSRS conducted a national omnibus phone study between March 4-7, 2022, on behalf of CGA. A total of 1,003 Americans ages 18+ were asked about their homeowner status and opinions on home and property improvement project topics. The survey had a margin of error of +/- 3.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.*

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