

April is Safe Digging Month: Know What's **BELOW**

And use the right tools for the job

NOW THAT THE GROUND is finally thawing after a particularly brutal winter, let's plan our outside projects with safety in mind. The first step in any project that requires digging—including planting trees, erecting fences, building a deck, or any activity that requires you to dig a hole—is to have your underground utilities marked.

Buried public and private utilities could exist just about anywhere you dig. Homeowners and contractors can prevent damage to underground utilities, service interruptions and potential injuries by calling 811 or visiting www.kansasonecall.com to place a utilities locate request before beginning project work. It's free, easy, and it's the law!

“But won't this delay my project?”

Kansas One-Call accepts locate requests 24 hours a day. You can place a request on the weekends and after normal business hours. Here's how the timeline works:

- ▶ Request locate services by calling 811 or visiting www.kansasonecall.com.
- ▶ The utility has two full working days following the day of the request to mark the public utilities. So, if you place your request on Saturday, Sunday or Monday, by Thursday your public utilities will be marked. If you place a request on Wednesday, public utilities will be marked by Saturday. Requests placed on Friday will be completed by the following Wednesday. Holidays are not included when calculating the two full working days.

Respect the Marks and Dig with Care

Utility companies use colored flags or paint to indicate the approximate location of their underground utilities. To assist them, consider marking the area of excavation with white paint or white flags.

The paint and flags placed by the utility company indicate the approximate location of their facilities, which may be anywhere in a 2-foot (24-inches) tolerance zone on either side of the line of paint or flags. Don't be aggressive when digging close to the utility markings:

- ▶ Use only rounded/blunt-edged tools.

- ▶ Never use axes, hand or powered posthole diggers, pry bars or mechanized equipment.
- ▶ If the utility line is visible, keep the face of the shovel parallel with the utility line and use all precautions when removing the nearby soil.
- ▶ Don't assume a utility line you uncover is the only one—others may be close by or underneath.
- ▶ Don't attempt to move utility lines.

Public vs. Private Utilities: Who to call for Location Services

When you call 811 or visit www.kansasonecall.com to request underground utility locations to be marked, **YOUR PRIVATELY OWNED UNDERGROUND LINES WILL NOT BE MARKED.** These include but are not limited to: power or electric service, water and sewer pipes from the meter to your home, invisible fencing, sprinkler systems, well and septic systems, etc.

Some utility companies will locate private utility lines if requested. Check with your local utility company for details. Otherwise **CONTACT A PRIVATE UTILITY LOCATOR** to handle marking private underground utilities.

Mailboxes

Everyone knows the location of your mailbox makes it easy to get mail delivered, especially your *Kansas Country Living* magazine, but did you know the location of your mailbox makes it even more important to call before digging? Many utility lines are buried along streets in right-of-ways, and most mailboxes require holes 36 to 42 inches deep. At the same time, if you are removing an old post set with cement, you will have to dig even deeper until it can be removed.

Your mailbox presents a relatively inexpensive opportunity to project your personal style—but it also presents an opportunity to show you know that smart digging means calling 811 before you replace it. **KCL**

Information provided by Kansas One-Call. Visit www.kansasonecall.com.