

TECHNICAL INFORMATION PAPER SERIES: LANDSCAPER BEST PRACTICES FOR UNDERGROUND UTILITIES



CALL BEFORE YOU DIG TO PREVENT COSTLY RISKS, LOSSES AND INJURIES.

There are reportedly 20 million miles of underground utilities here in the United States, which presents a challenge for landscape contractors.

When engaged in activities such as excavating, installing irrigation or grading soils, landscape contractors should identify any underground utilities that may be damaged by their work prior to performing any such work.

Digging without knowing where underground utilities are can cause damage to electric, gas, communications, water and sewer lines, leading to catastrophic injuries and expensive repairs.

PROCEDURE BEFORE DIGGING

To minimize the risk of loss, several days before digging, you should:

- Call the underground utilities service's local call center
- Describe what type of digging you'll be performing and where you intend to dig

Utility companies who may have underground lines in your dig area will then be notified. These companies will send a locator to identify and mark the location of underground utility lines in your dig area – usually within two to three working days.



It's the law. Calling before you dig is not only a best practice to follow – it's the law in most states.

COLOR CODING TEMPORARILY IDENTIFIES UTILITY LINES

Markings used will follow the American Public Works (APWA) [Uniform Color Codes](#) for temporary marking of underground utilities:

	Red	Electric power lines, cables, conduit, and lighting cables
	Orange	Telecommunication, alarm or signal lines, cables, or conduit
	Yellow	Natural gas, oil, steam, petroleum, or other gaseous or flammable material
	Green	Sewers and drain lines
	Blue	Drinking water
	Purple	Reclaimed water, irrigation, and slurry lines
	Pink	Temporary survey markings, unknown/unidentified facilities
	White	Proposed excavation limits or route

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