

Before starting outdoor projects, consider utility safety

Outdoor projects such as landscaping, fence installation, tree planting, and mailbox replacement can improve your property. They can also create serious safety risks if utility lines are not properly identified first. Before starting any project that involves digging, homeowners should think about utility safety both below and above ground.

BEFORE DIGGING

Before starting any digging project, homeowners should contact Indiana 811 online or by dialing 811 to have public underground utility lines marked. Underground utility lines may be closer to the surface than expected, making it important to locate them before digging begins. Striking an underground utility line can cause injuries, outages, expensive repairs, or service disruptions for your neighborhood.

Indiana law requires contacting Indiana 811 at least two full working days before excavation begins, excluding weekends and holidays. After a request is submitted, utility operators will mark the approximate location of underground lines using paint or flags. Indiana 811 marks public utility lines leading to the utility meter. Private utility lines, such as those connected to outdoor lighting, irrigation systems, detached garages, or fire pits, may not be marked and could require a private locator.

LOOK ABOVE

Homeowners should also look above ground before beginning outdoor projects. Ladders, long-handled tools, tree limbs, and other materials can come dangerously close to overhead power lines. Trees and landscaping should never

be planted too close to overhead power lines or utility poles. Trees growing into power lines are one of the leading causes of outages during storms and high winds. Branches contacting power lines can interrupt electric service and create dangerous conditions.

LANDSCAPING

When planning landscaping projects, homeowners should also keep pad-mounted transformers and other utility equipment clear and accessible for utility crews. Shrubs, fencing, mulch, and decorative landscaping should not block access to electrical equipment. Taking a few extra steps before starting a project can help protect your family, property, and electric service.