



Call before you dig!

Homeowners, picture this: you're putting in that swimming pool or spa, planting that tree, installing a sprinkler system, or building a deck or fence. You plunge your shovel into the earth, and . . . out go the lights! BZZZ – your hair is on end!! Ka-BLAM: you've caused a natural gas explosion!!

According the Utility Coordinating Committee, a damage prevention council, a national study revealed that fifty percent of accidents involving underground utility lines result from people digging without knowing the location of buried electric, gas, cable, or other service lines. If you, or a hired contractor, are planning any type of digging, you are required by law to request the location of underground utility lines 48 hours before breaking ground. Call the Lone Star Notification Center at (713) 223-4567 or (800) 669-8344. Utility companies will come and stake their buried lines free of charge. Some power lines on private property may not belong to the electric transmission and distribution utility (CenterPoint Energy in Houston). In such cases, the CenterPoint Energy hotline will help you contact private location companies to stake these lines for a modest fee. If after 48 hours your gas or electric line has not been located, you may call the CenterPoint Energy hotline at (713) 207-5463.

Remember, one careless dig can cause loss of service, cost you money, and threaten your health or life. Entire subdivisions, shopping malls and medical centers could lose electric power; gas service; regular, cellular, and 911 phone service; and cable TV! Someone in your neighborhood may depend on life-support systems requiring electricity.

If you hit a power line with mechanical equipment or hand digging tools, you could be shocked or electrocuted. If you hit a gas line, chances are you will cause a fire.

And it'll cost you. Labor, supplies and equipment to repair underground facilities can cost hundreds of dollars – in some cases, thousands. And insurance companies pass the cost onto customers.

For safety's sake, plan your project. Call before you dig.