



National Fuel Reminds Customers to Call Before You Dig

The Common Ground Alliance has designated April 2009 National Safe Digging Month

(April 2, 2009) Williamsville, NY: National Fuel would like to remind homeowners to call 811, the national "Call Before You Dig" phone number, or visit www.call811.com, prior to planning any excavation projects this year. Calling 811 prior to digging projects is required by New York State Law and can prevent accidental damage to underground utility lines.

The national phone number connects callers with a "One Call Center" in their area. Local "One Call Center" operators record the location of the excavation and then notify National Fuel of the caller's plans. National Fuel will then dispatch a professional locator to mark the approximate location of National Fuel's lines for free. Homeowners and contractors should call 811 at least two (2) but no more than 10 business days in advance of the start of their project (does not include the date of the call) to allow time for the request to be processed. Once your project is underway, and in observance of the markings, please remember that you are required to stop using heavy equipment and hand dig within two feet of either side of the markings.

The 811 "Call Before You Dig" initiative is sponsored by the Common Ground Alliance (CGA), the leading association created specifically to work with **all** industry stakeholders in an effort to prevent damage to underground utility infrastructure and ensure public safety and environmental protection. The CGA and its stakeholders have designated April as National Safe Digging Month. This month is dedicated to increasing awareness of safe digging practices across the country and to celebrate the two-year anniversary of 811, the national "Call Before You Dig" phone number. The CGA, officially formed in 2000, represents a continuation of the United States Department of Transportation's Common Ground Study – a study that highlighted the need for one organization to continuously update best practices among the growing underground utility industry.

"All excavation projects require a call – even small or shallow digging projects like planting trees and shrubs, or installing a fence or mailbox," said Julie Coppola Cox, Assistant General Manager of Corporate Communications, National Fuel. "If you damage an underground utility line while digging, you run the risk of harming yourself or those around you, disrupting service to an entire neighborhood and potentially being held responsible for fines and repair costs."

National Fuel Gas Company is an integrated energy company with \$4.2 billion in assets comprising four principal operating segments: Utility, Pipeline and Storage, Exploration and Production, and Energy Marketing. National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation, the Utility segment, provides natural gas service to more than 500,000 customers in western New York and more than 200,000 customers in northwestern Pennsylvania. Additional information about the Utility and its customer services is available at www.nationalfuelgas.com or by calling 1-800-365-3234.