



Ameren Illinois Recognizes Sunday, Aug. 11, as National 8-1-1 Day

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COLLINSVILLE – Ameren Illinois is joining utilities across the country in recognizing Sunday, August 11, as National 8-1-1 Day by reminding customers and contractors to follow the law and call 8-1-1 before starting a digging project.

Whether it is a contractor using heavy equipment or a customer turning the ground with a shovel, excavation work causes damage to underground utilities every six minutes in the United States, according to data collected by Common Ground Alliance.

8-1-1 is a national number but in Illinois, it connects to a nonprofit organization called the Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators (J.U.L.I.E). If J.U.L.I.E determines that Ameren Illinois has underground facilities (typically buried natural gas or electrical

lines) in the requested dig location, the organization issues a dig ticket. Ameren Illinois then dispatches USIC within two business days to identify and mark the lines. Digging can only begin once the marking process is complete and the start time on the ticket is valid.

The J.U.L.I.E. service is available free of charge. Requests can also be made on line by visiting, Illinois1call.com.

“A customer starting an outdoor project may not be aware of the natural gas and electric infrastructure beneath the ground,” said Eric Kozak, Vice President of Gas Operations for Ameren Illinois. “Proactively calling 8-1-1 can help prevent a service interruption, costly repairs or potential serious injury by ensuring all buried facilities are identified and clearly marked before the first shovel breaks the earth.”

Even after the facilities are marked, all digging within the tolerant zone (18 inches on either side of a marked line) must be completed by hand.

In the event that an underground facility is struck while digging, there are two courses of action depending on whether natural gas is leaking.

If the strike results in a rotten egg smell, blowing dirt or bubbling water, then natural gas is likely leaking. Immediately clear the area and call 911, then Ameren Illinois at 800-755-5000, and then 8-1-1.

If there is no noticeable release of natural gas, stop digging immediately and call Ameren Illinois at 800-755-5000. Ameren Illinois must arrive on scene to make repairs to the damaged line before the project can continue.

“Do not under any circumstance ignore a facility strike and continue working,” said Gina Meehan-Taylor, Public Awareness Supervisor for Ameren Illinois. “Too often, people overlook damaged pipeline and continue working or attempt fix to damage on their own. This can create a more dangerous situation.”

“While Ameren Illinois received more than 400,000 total J.U.L.I.E notifications in 2018, we still find that many people choose not to call,” Kozak said. “We really can’t stress this critical safety message enough.”