

Your Energy Connection



March 2015

National Safe Digging Month

Spring is near, which means eager homeowners are gearing up to start those outdoor digging projects. Before you reach for the shovel, remember to call 811. April is designated as National Safe Digging Month to remind residents to call 811, the national call-before-you-dig number, to ensure that buried utility lines are marked.

Striking a single line can cause harm to you or those around you, disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, and potentially result in fines and repair costs.

A call must be placed to 811 before every digging project, no matter how large or small. Whether it's planting trees or shrubs, building a deck or installing a mailbox, smart digging means calling 811 before each job. Every six minutes an underground utility line is damaged because someone decided to dig without first calling 811.

Even when digging only a few inches, the risk of striking an underground utility line still exists.

The Safe Digging Process:

Step 1: Have all your information ready before calling, such as your address, where you will be digging, the purpose of the digging project, and how long it will take to complete the project.

Step 2: Call 811 to speak with a NC811 customer service representative. The representative will ask you questions about the project to determine which utilities to contact for you. At the end of the call you will receive a locate number, which can be used to check the status of your locate and to see which utilities have marked their lines.

Step 3: Wait three full working days before you begin digging. While you wait, it's a good idea to use white paint or flags to mark where you plan to dig. This lets the

utility locators know the exact area of your excavation.

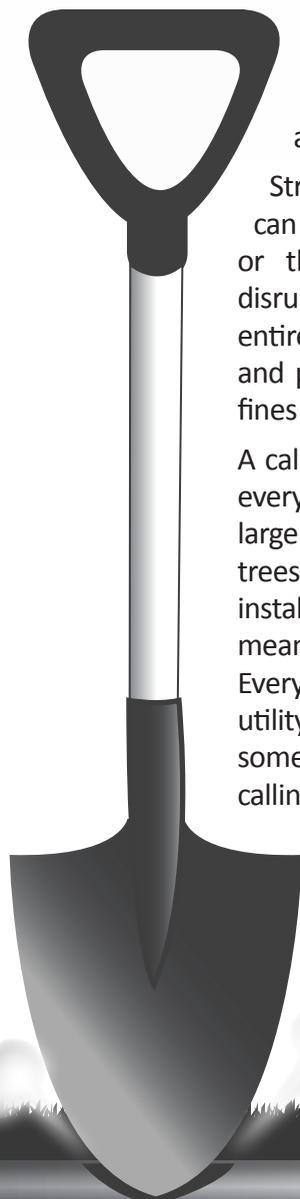
Step 4: Once the underground facilities have been located, it's important that the stakes, flags or paint not be disturbed. Each utility will use a designated color to mark underground lines: Red (Electric); Orange (Communications); Yellow (Gas/Oil/Steam); Green (Sewer); Blue (Water); Pink (Temporary Survey Markings); and Purple (Irrigation and Slurry Lines).

Step 5: Always dig with care. The tolerance zone is a 24-inch buffer on either side of a marked utility line. If you must dig within this zone, please use extreme caution and dig with a hand shovel (no mechanized equipment).



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

To watch "The Safe Digging Process" or to view the "NC 811: Homeowner's Guide to Safe Digging," visit www.rockymountnc.gov/utilities/communications.html. For more information, visit www.nc811.org.

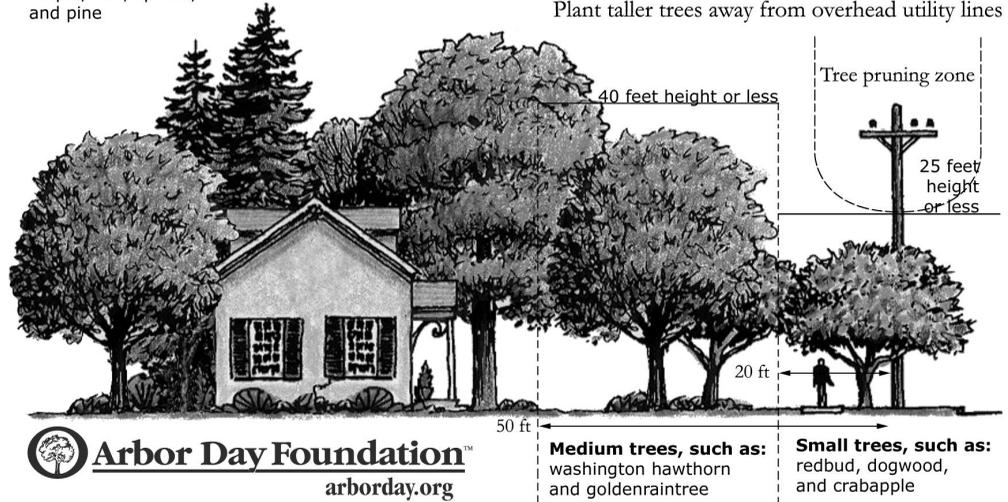


Right Tree in the Right Place

Before planting trees, it is important to know what the tree will look like as it nears maturity. To determine the amount of overhead space needed, check the tree's mature height and canopy spread. Also, consider the tree's form or shape. For example, a columnar tree will grow in less space, but round and v-shaped species provide the most shade.

It's also important to determine the underground space needed by considering the tree's rooting habits. Before beginning any digging project, always call 811 to have underground lines, pipes and cables marked.

Tall trees, such as:
maple, oak, spruce,
and pine



The above illustration was obtained from the Arbor Day Foundation to show where trees should be planted in relation to utility lines.

Choosing the right type of tree and location can also help you save energy. Deciduous trees lose their foliage (i.e. leaves) during cold weather. When planted on the south and west sides of the home, they save energy by creating shade in the summer and allowing sunlight to warm the home in the winter.

For additional information, visit the Tree Trimming page at utilities.rockymountnc.gov or www.arborday.org. For assistance with selecting the right tree location, call Forester Allen Richardson at (252) 467-4856.

Reporting Street Light Outages

There are two ways to report a street light outage:

- **Call (252) 467-4800.** Dispatch operators are available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week to take your calls. You should also use this number if you have a gas, electric, water or sewer emergency.
- **Visit the Citizen's Reporting Center** online at www.rockymountnc.gov/crc.html. In addition to street light outages, you can use this online tool to report various issues, such as park/ballfield light outages, ballfield/tennis courts lights left on, malfunctioning traffic signals and low-hanging/dead limbs.

Load Management Program

RMPU electric customers can earn up to \$129 per year in credits on their utility bill by having load management switches installed on one or more appliances:

- Electric Water Heater: \$2.00 credit per month
- Electric Heat Strips: \$15.00 credit per month during three months of winter
- Central Air Conditioner: \$20.00 credit per month during three months of summer

There is no fee for the switches or installation.

Enroll today by calling (252) 467-4803 or visiting www.rockymountnc.gov/utilities/loadmanagement.html.



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