



Safe Digging Guide



811 BEFORE YOU DIG

Kentucky811.org

or Dial 811

24 Hours a Day, 7 Days a Week

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Preface

This guide is not a legal document, it provides basic information on safe digging practices in Kentucky. It is intended as an **educational** resource **only**. The information contained in this guide is subject to change without notice.

Refer to the Kentucky Revised Statutes for complete content where **KRS** is cited in this guide.

You may view the **current** law in its entirety by visiting [Kentucky811.org/Law](https://kentucky811.org/Law) or scan the QR code on your smartphone for easy access.



The 811 logo is located throughout this guide emphasizing tips to help you dig safely.

To access a Spanish safe digging guide, please visit:

version en español

<https://kentucky811.org/resources/>

Kentucky811.org

811 Before I Dig

Everyone is required by law to contact the protection notification center prior to any digging activity. If more than one (1) excavator/entity/homeowner will operate at the same site, **each** excavator/entity shall contact the protection notification center. Failure to have underground utility lines located prior to any digging activity could result in the cost of repairs to the damaged utility and penalties may be imposed by an enforcing agency. **[KRS 367.4911, KRS 367.4917]**

What is an Excavation?

Excavation is defined as **any** activity resulting in the **movement of earth**. Included but not limited to the following:

- Demolition ◦ Timber Harvesting ◦ Landscaping ◦
- Blasting ◦ Drilling ◦ Grading ◦ Trenching ◦
- Scraping ◦ Auguring ◦ Driving ◦ Piling ◦ Drainage ◦
- Logging ◦ Backfilling ◦ Concrete Formation ◦

[KRS 367.4903 {3} {6}1



Why do I need to contact 811?

- ∞ To Prevent Injury or Death
- ∞ It's the Law! Avoid fines & costly repairs.
- ∞ It's **Free!** Why Risk It?

Kentucky 811

Kentucky 811 is **FREE** statewide service that provides a common link between the Kentucky digging community and **member** utility operators.



Kentucky 811 does not locate or mark underground utilities. Please note that not all utility owners are members of Kentucky 811. You are responsible to contact non-members.

Kentucky 811 provides a quality driven one-call process to protect:

- 00 YOU;
- 00 the public;
- 00 the underground infrastructure; and
- 00 the environment

[KRS 367.4903 (9)1

The law requires two (2) **full** working days' notice (**but no more than 10**) in advance of digging. A working day is a 24-hour time period excluding the day of submission, Saturday, Sunday, or Federal/State Holidays.

[KRS 367.4911 and KRS 367.4903 {12}]

Process to Request a locate

Ways to submit a locate request:

- 00 Dial **8-1-1** or **(800) 752-6007**
- 00 Online <https://kentucky811.org/submit-a-ticket/>
- 00 Contact non-member utility operator

What information will I need to submit a request?

- 00 Excavator/Homeowner/Entity Name
- 00 Excavator/Homeowner/Entity Phone Number
- 00 Caller's Name
- 00 Excavator/Homeowner/Entity Mailing Address
- 00 Excavator/Homeowner/Entity Email Address
- 00 Dig Site County/City (inside or outside of city limits)
- 00 Dig Site Subdivision and Lot Number (if applicable)
- 00 Dig Site Address
- 00 Cross Street/Intersection Street to Dig Site
- 00 Work site contact information
- 00 Type of Work
- 00 Depth of Dig
- 00 Description of Dig Site Property

Large Project locate requests are considered an area of digging/excavation measuring more than 2000' in length. Multiple excavation notifications in an area may be considered together to determine if the excavations are part of a large project.

[KRS 367.4903 (18)]

Defining Emergency Locate Requests

Emergency is defined as having the substantial likelihood that loss of life or property, the inability to restore interrupted utility service, an imminent danger to health or the environment, or the blockage of essential public services will result. ***[KRS 367.4903 (7)]***

A person that knowingly provides false notice to a utility notification center of an emergency as defined in KRS 367.4903 (7) shall be subject to a fine of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for each violation.

[KRS 367.4917]



[Emergency locate requests are restricted to the excavation activities defined above. Please do not request emergency locates for other activities.](#)

Information provided by Kentucky 811

- o Unique Locate Request Identification Number
- o List of Member Utilities that will be Notified



The locate request identification number may be referred to as a BUD number, ticket number or confirmation number.

Next Step

The requesting party will receive from each notified utility operator an update or status notification, also known as “Positive Response”. Each affected utility owner/operator is required by law to provide positive response within two (2) working days excluding the day the locate request was made.

Positive Response

Positive Response is defined as an automated or written communication. If positive response has not been received for each affected utility, PLEASE DO NOT DIG.

A second notice is required by law to each affected utility that has not provided positive response within two (2) working days. The affected utility has one (1) working day after second notice to provide positive response.

Don't assume all utilities have responded to your request. *[KRS 367.4911 {12}]*

Positive Response Exceptions

Circumstances listed below may require additional working days to complete the locate request.

- Large Project Request:
Three (3) additional working days
- Unmapped/Untonable Facility:
Three (3) additional working days
- Extraordinary Circumstances:
Extreme weather conditions, force majeure, disasters, or civil unrest that make timely response difficult or impossible

[KRS 367.4909 {11}]

Locates

Temporary underground utility markers shall consist of paint, flags, chalk, stakes, or any combination thereof and shall conform to the following standards of the American Public Works Association uniform color code:
[KRS 367.4909 (B)J

You'll know what's below by the different flags, stakes or paint.



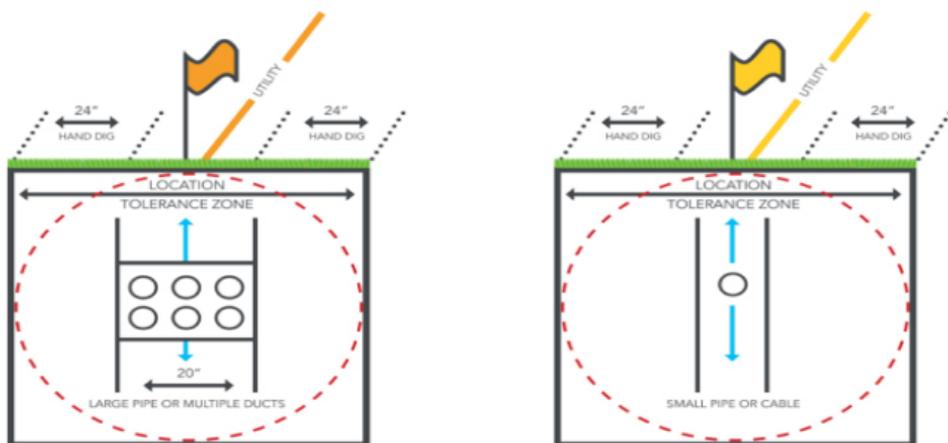
Respect the marks!

- ⁰⁰ Marks may be in paint, flags, chalk, etc.
- ⁰⁰ Protect and preserve temporary underground utility markers until the scheduled digging or demolition is complete.
- ⁰⁰ Do not attempt to refresh marks.
Contact the notification center for remark.

Working within the approximate location of the underground utility or tolerance zone

When digging/excavating or demolition is necessary within the approximate location of the underground utility, you should **CAUTIOUSLY** hand-dig or use non-intrusive means to avoid damaging an underground utility. (See exceptions in Additional Information section.)

Kentucky law requires everyone to observe the approximate location around underground utilities, an area equal to the width of the underground utility plus, an additional 24 inches on each side.



Safe digging within the approximate location of the utility or tolerance zone allows you to expose the utility on all sides.

Methods of working within a specified tolerance zone include:

Hand digging or **Vacuum excavation**
[KRS 367.4903 {11}; KRS 367.4911 {10}]

Additional Information

For users who submit locate requests frequently, Kentucky 811 will assign you an “Excavator ID” to simplify the process.

Please plan work in proper phases to avoid multiple locate requests. Locate requests are required for digging/excavation commencing within the 10-day time frame.

Notification by an excavator/entity shall serve as notification for its employees.

Don't perform work on someone else's locate request.

The excavator shall inform and provide to site employees any related safety information provided by the operator including the locate request identification number assigned by each protection notification center.

Utility operators are not responsible for marking/locating customer owned utilities.

Assess the proposed digging area for evidence of unmarked utilities.

The excavator should always properly expose and support each utility facility at each crossing. Please refer to industry best practices when performing specialized excavation.

When excavation in the tolerance zone is necessary, mechanized equipment may be used to remove pavement, other man-made hard surfaces, or indigenous rock only to the depth necessary.

Verify that someone other than the equipment operator, i.e. the spotter, is there to look for any sign of the underground utility.

Protect and support exposed facilities during construction and take care while backfilling to maintain support to prevent damage. Be sure backfill materials are free of any material that could damage the utility.

Keep a list of emergency contact numbers including law enforcement, fire and utilities.

ALWAYS Contact the protection notification center if:

- 00 the markings of any underground utility have been removed or are no longer visible;
- 00 the type of work, scope of the plan or location has changed;
- 00 the digging/excavation or demolition continues beyond the twenty-one (21) calendar day period, you must request remarking two (2) working days in advance of the expiration date. **[KRS 367.4911 (8)]**

A permit issued authorizing excavation or demolition shall not relieve a person from complying with KRS 3467.4905 to KRS 347.4917.

Pipeline Markers

Markers are often used to identify buried utility pipelines and include the operator name, emergency contact number.

Permanent pipeline markers **do not represent** the exact location of a buried utility. A pipeline marker indicates that a utility is in the area. The pipeline or cable may not run in a straight line between markers.



Damage

" Damage" is defined as weakening of structural or lateral support or penetration of a utility coating, housing, or other protective device. It also means the partial or complete dislocation or severance of underground utilities permanently inaccessible by the placement of a permanent structure having one (1) or more stories. *[KRS 367.4903 (2)]*

What to do if a damage or "hit" occurs

00 STOP IMMEDIATELY;

- 00 If damage results in the escape of flammable, toxic or corrosive gas or liquid, evacuate immediately and dial **911 from a safe distance**; do not attempt to stop the flow or attempt to repair;
- 00 Notify all affected utility operators of the location (address) and nature of damage;
- 00 Have your locate request identification number available;
- 00 Stay a safe distance, upwind, until help has arrived;
- 00 All breaks, leaks, nicks, dents, gouges, grooves, scrapes or any damage to utility lines must be reported to the appropriate utility operators for inspection. *[KRS 367.4911 {9}1}*

Penalties

Any person who fails to comply with any provision of KRS 367.4911, or an operator who fails to comply with any provision of KRS 367.4909, shall be guilty of endangering underground utilities and may be subject to a penalty fine enforced by Kentucky Public Service Commission or other law enforcement agency.

{KRS 367.4917}

Damage Prevention Councils

Councils have been formed throughout the state to raise awareness about safe digging and excavation practices, serving as a resource to form a knowledgeable damage prevention network.

Damage to underground utilities as a result of digging/excavation activities can be a serious issue and result in serious consequences if the law has not been followed.

For more information about Kentucky Damage Prevention Councils, please visit:

Kentucky811.org/damage-prevention-councils



Support damage prevention in your community by attending a local meeting.



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

Revision 3
January 2022

Kentucky811.org