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For Immediate Release

811 Day Highlights Free Safe Digging Resource Amid Rising Excavation Damages

Ameren Missouri encourages everyone to call 811 before any excavation project, citing uptick in damage in central Missouri

Editor's note: Video soundbites, b-roll and photos are available in an [online media kit](#).

COLUMBIA, Mo. (Aug. 11, 2022) – With twice as many reports of excavation damage in July 2022 compared to July 2021, Ameren Missouri is urging customers and construction crews to call 811 or visit [MO1Call.com](#) before any digging project.

National 811 Day is Aug. 11 (8/11), highlighting the risk of unsafe digging practices, which include gas leaks and serious outages. Customers and excavation crews must call 1-800-DIG-RITE or 811 prior to any digging.

"We're concerned by the upward trend of excavation damage and the safety risk these dig-ins can cause," said **Pam Harrison**, director of gas operations for Ameren Missouri. "Calling 811 is a simple step that helps avert serious outages or gas leaks that could impact our entire community. No one wants to be faced with an injury or major utility disruption that could have been avoided."

With every call, a professional will come to the property within three business days and mark the location of all utility, phone and cable lines to minimize risks while digging. These underground lines can be as little as a few inches below ground.

Calling 811 is one of the most effective measures for promoting safety and preventing damage during excavation. Research has shown that those who call 811 prior to digging avoid environmental or health incidents 99% of the time.

"Our data shows fewer people calling to have their utilities marked this year compared to 2021. We want to raise awareness of this trend and encourage the public to do their part in preventing damage to underground lines by calling 811 to have utilities marked," **Harrison** said.

Not only is marking utility lines a free service, it's also a legal requirement. These tips will help you stay in compliance and avoid costly mistakes during your next dig:

1. Call 1-800-DIG-RITE, 811 or visit [MO1Call.com](#) at least three business days before starting a digging project. Requests can be made 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
2. Wait until a professional locator comes out to mark natural gas, electric, water, sewer, telephone and cable lines. The approximate location of buried utilities will be marked with paint and flags so you don't unintentionally dig



- into an underground utility line. Each utility type corresponds to a specific color of paint and flag, and all of them must be marked before you can dig.
3. Once the site has been clearly marked, proceed to dig with caution. Make sure to dig carefully around the marks. Use the appropriate tools to dig with care and follow [safe digging practices](#).

It's important to have utilities freshly marked every time you dig, even if you have had utilities marked for past projects. The lines may have shifted due to erosion and root growth since the last project. To learn more about safe digging, visit [MO1Call.com](#).

About Ameren Missouri

Ameren Missouri has been providing electric and gas service for more than 100 years, and the company's electric rates are among the lowest in the nation. Ameren Missouri's mission is to power the quality of life for its 1.2 million electric and 135,000 natural gas customers in central and eastern Missouri. The company's service area covers 64 counties and more than 500 communities, including the greater St. Louis area. For more information, visit [Ameren.com/Missouri](#) or follow us on Twitter at [@AmerenMissouri](#) or [Facebook.com/AmerenMissouri](#).

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