

Call Before You Dig

Call 811 before digging to keep you and underground utilities safe

Spring will be on the way soon. Once the ground is ready for planting, eager homeowners begin to gear up to start outdoor digging projects.

Before you reach for the shovel to start digging, remember to call 811, the national call-before-you-dig number.

Our land is made up of a complex underground infrastructure of pipelines, wires and cables. Striking an underground utility line while digging can harm you or those around you, disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, and potentially result in fines and repair costs.

Call 811 before any digging project—from simple landscaping projects such as planting trees or shrubs to building a deck or installing a mailbox.

Every six minutes, an underground utility line is damaged because someone decided to dig without calling 811 or going

to www.callbeforeyoudig.org to submit a locate request online.

The process is simple.

It is free to call 811 and makes it easy for the local one-call center to notify all appropriate utility companies.

Call at least 48 hours before digging to ensure enough time for utility lines to be properly marked. When you call, a representative will ask for the location and description of the digging project.

Getting these lines marked prevents digging equipment from hitting or cutting off power, water, phone, cable, fiber, sewer or gas lines. Klickitat PUD will send an employee to mark the approximate location of your lines. The representatives for marking electrical lines are Ed Lexa and Tim Garrigus. They respond to requests from the notification center and mark underground power lines, cables or

conduits, and lighting cables with red spray paint.

KPUD also provides water and wastewater services to many communities throughout the county. The PUD maintains water and sewer lines in Glenwood, Klickitat, Lyle, Dallesport, Roosevelt, Bickleton, Wishram and the areas of Ponderosa Park and Rimrock in Goldendale.

If you dig in one of these communities, a member of the PUD water and wastewater crew will respond and mark water and sewer lines. Crew members are Brandon Walter, Greg Watson, Rod Kiser, Tim McMurrin, Noah Halm and Doug Frantum. Water is marked in blue. Sewer and drain lines are marked in green.

Once lines have been properly marked, roll up those sleeves and carefully dig around the marked areas. Be careful and dig by hand within 2 feet of marks.

Helpful tips when you call include:

- Identify the proposed dig site on a map so you can recite the city, county and any obvious landmarks.
- Determine the distance and direction from the nearest cross street.
- Identify the township, range, section and quarter section of the work site if no specific street or address is applicable.

Customers are required to mark the boundary of the excavation area in white.

Each year, KPUD receives more than 1,300 location requests. This service is dedicated to protecting citizens and construction personnel who work around utilities and safeguarding the underground infrastructure of your community.

Calling before you dig prevents damage to underground facilities, service interruptions and injury.

Work safely this season. Know what's below. Call before you dig. ■



Electrical Safety on the Farm

Each year, farmworkers are electrocuted when large machinery contacts overhead power lines. Tragedy can be avoided by paying attention to the unique electric risks faced by farmers.

Wiring Agricultural Facilities

A particular problem with electricity on the farm is the dusty, moist and corrosive environments of most livestock houses.

Waterproof, dustproof and even explosion-proof electrical boxes, outlets and motors are available for livestock facilities.

Type NMC or UF cable is recommended for most situations.

Check with a qualified electrician before buying cable to connect a branch circuit.

Protect Electric Cable

Encasing electric cable inside conduit provides extra protection from livestock and gnawing rodents.

There are two basic types of conduit: metal and PVC (plastic). PVC is preferred inside agricultural structures because it is not corroded by moisture and is generally less expensive than metal conduit.

All electric cables in an agricultural structure, whether encased in conduit or not, should be placed in open areas for frequent inspection and maintenance.

Ground-Fault Circuit Interrupters

A ground-fault circuit interrupter is a circuit breaker designed to prevent serious shock to people or animals under certain conditions. It can reduce the risk of shock when using electrical tools or appliances in damp or wet areas.

If a ground fault occurs—either to the grounding wire or through a person or animal—some of the current will take an alternate route back to the system's grounding electrode. One of the wires will carry less current than the other wire.

When this occurs, the GFCI breaks the circuit, stopping the flow of electricity, thereby reducing the electric shock hazard.

Ground-fault circuit interrupters come in several styles. They are commonly used as a receptacle outlet, part of an extension



Be aware of your surroundings—high and low—when working on and around farm equipment.

cord or installed in the main electrical panel to replace an existing circuit breaker. When installed as a circuit breaker, the GFCI offers shock protection to an entire electrical branch.

The most effective shock prevention system for agricultural equipment and circuits is an equipment grounding conductor run with the circuit wires and connected to all metal agricultural equipment.

Extension Cords

For agricultural use, buy extension cords with a strong outer coating.

Type “S” hard service cords have the strongest outer covering. Don't confuse it with other “S” ratings, such as Type SJ. The “J” stands for junior hard service cord, and should not be used outdoors.

Extension cords are sold in various cable sizes. Smaller numbers indicate larger wire size. No. 10 wire is larger than No. 14.

Teach and Practice Safety

Even with the proper installations, tragedy can result due to carelessness and lack of knowledge. Know the location of power lines, and keep farm equipment at least 10 feet away from them.

Use care when raising augers or the bed of a grain truck—estimating distance can be hard. Sometimes a power line is closer than

it looks. When moving large equipment or high loads near a power line, always use a spotter or someone to help make certain contact is not made with a line.

Always lower portable augers or elevators to their lowest possible level before moving or transporting them. Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting larger modern tractors, which often have higher antennas.

Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.

Be careful of bumping into the guy wires on electrical poles. This will cause sagging in the overhead lines and will make entanglement more likely.

What to Do in an Emergency

Teach farm equipment operators what to do if a vehicle contacts a power line.

If the power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path and electrocution results.

In that case, the proper action is to jump—not step—with both feet hitting the ground simultaneously. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the equipment and the ground at the same time.

Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to get back on it. Many electrocutions occur when the operator dismounts, nothing happens, and they try to get back on the equipment. ■