

# E<sup>the</sup> Excavator

A newsletter published by Wisconsin's one-call center

## CONTACTING DIGGERS HOTLINE:

## A Homeowner "How To"

Everyone.  
Every time.  
Everywhere.  
And yes, that even includes you!

Diggers Hotline processes thousands of "locate requests" through phone calls to our call center, and through electronic methods, such as the "email a locate" program. For many of you out there, especially homeowners, you may have no idea what any of these terms

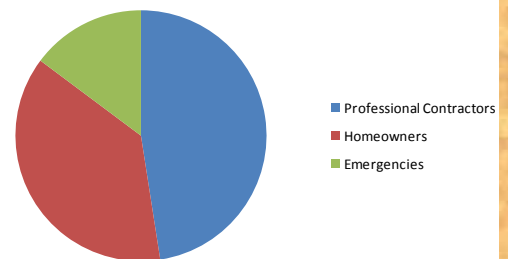
**DIY Homeowners must follow the same safety precautions as a trained contractor.**

mean! All things considered, it doesn't matter how much you have brushed up on your "One Call" terms (there's another one); the one thing you need to know is that if your DIY project disturbs the earth, you must first contact Diggers Hotline.

If you are thinking, "Well, I'm hardly going to dig below the surface so I shouldn't have to call you guys," you

aren't alone, but you are mistaken. Because of grade changes, or changes in the amount of earth covering the utilities due to erosion, previous digging projects and uneven surfaces, the utilities in the ground can be just below the surface. A Wisconsin state law says that if you do not contact Diggers Hotline before dig-

Calls to Diggers Hotline in 2010



ging in, you are liable for any damage to the lines. Furthermore, in the case of hitting an electric or gas line, not only can your pocketbook hurt after the fact, but you are putting yourself and others in harm's way as well.

We never mean to scare Wisconsin residents into contacting Diggers Hotline because it's really a fairly simple and painless process. For all those Diggers Hotline novices, we've put together a "How To" guide for you. As we speak, many of you may be on your way out the door to install a new bird feeder, mailbox, for sale sign or dig a firepit. If you are, STOP, and **make sure you have followed the three simple steps listed on page 2.**





**This homeowner found out the hard way where his lines were located after hitting a gas line while building a fire pit.**

## It's as easy as 1, 2, 3

**1.** Call us anytime of the day or night, seven days a week at our toll free number (800) 242-8511 or dial the three digit dialing code "811." This code works the same way 911 does in connecting to you to an emergency dispatcher but instead, it connects you with our call center in New Berlin. State law requires that the locators, or people who place the flags and marks where the lines lay, have three full working days to locate the utilities in your work area. So always remember to plan ahead!

When anyone calls in, we have to ask a number of standard questions:

- Specify you are a homeowner and give your name, telephone number and address.
- The city, township, village, or unincorporated area you are planning to work in.

- The street address of your work site.
  - The nearest intersecting road and the distance and direction from that road. (This helps our call center representatives to find your exact location on our maps.)
  - The kind of work you are doing, such as planting a tree or putting up a fence.
  - The date you plan to start your work.
  - The area you would like to have marked for underground facilities on the property. For example, "a 20-foot radius of the tree in the back yard," or "a 10-foot perimeter of the staked area west of the garage."
- Many of these questions are required by state law. But all of them help the utility's locators get to your jobsite and correctly mark the location of their lines which may conflict with your jobsite.

It may seem like a lot of questions, but our average call takes just a few minutes. A few minutes of your time is nothing when you consider the headache you may go through without the call.

**2.** Once you have put in your request, you must wait three working days before you start your project. A working day is any weekday that is not a state holiday.

**3.** After your wait, you are free to dig, being sure to stay as far away from the lines as possible. As a general rule, your safest bet is to stay a minimum of 18 inches away from the lines on either side. The markings may not be completely in line with where the utilities lay. They could be in this "buffer zone" of 18 inches on either side. So once again, the safest practice is to avoid this area entirely.

So, there you have it, in 3 simple steps, everyone should have their lines located, every time and everywhere.



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



**What's wrong with this picture?**



**The mailbox was just installed, but Diggers Hotline wasn't called**

**Think it's not going to happen to you? Check out this real life blog from a Wisconsin homeowner:**

So last Thursday night, Jeremy was going to replace the mailbox post. He took the old one out and started to dig a few inches below where that one was to put the new one in. And then he ran in the house, yelling for me to find the number for the gas company, and to call 911. He had hit the gas line with the shovel and gas was hissing out. Within 5 minutes, the gas company, a fire truck, an ambulance and two police cars were here. The gas guy worked to put the line back together while everyone else stood ready in case there were problems.