

## Daniel Buchholtz

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**From:** Wilhelmi, Michael S <Michael.S.Wilhelmi@xcelenergy.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 11, 2023 1:11 PM  
**To:** Wilhelmi, Michael S  
**Subject:** FW: Xcel Energy press release: Stay safe while gardening and landscaping, call 8-1-1 before you dig

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Dear City Leader,

I'm sending along this press release regarding National Safe Digging Month. Please feel free to use in your newsletters or other communications with citizens.

Thanks for your help,

Mike  
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## **Stay safe while gardening and landscaping: Call 8-1-1 before you dig**

*April is National Safe Digging Month*

**MINNEAPOLIS** (April 11, 2023) – Xcel Energy is advising customers who are eager to start their spring planting or landscaping to always call 8-1-1 to have underground utility lines marked free of charge before starting any digging projects.

April is National Safe Digging Month, which serves as a reminder that digging without locating utility lines causes injuries, loss of life, and property damage every year. This damage can also lead to outages and fines. In 2022, Xcel Energy had 91 incidents in Minnesota when customers did not call 8-1-1 and then caused damage to buried gas or electric lines.

“Businesses and homeowners digging without locates presents the industry’s greatest risk to customer and public safety,” said Luke Litteken, Xcel Energy senior vice president of natural gas. “Historically, nearly 25% of the damages that occur to gas pipelines are a result of businesses and homeowners not calling for locates. Whether someone is installing a bush in their backyard or doing a larger home or public project, always call 811 for a free locate. If someone is contracting with a third party to do any work that requires soil movement, ensure that they call for a locate on your behalf. Only you can prevent the next pipeline or electrical line contact.”

In Minnesota, homeowners and contractors should call 8-1-1 or submit an online request to [Gopher State One Call](#) at least two business days before starting a project. Every digging project requires a call, regardless of whether the project is big or small. No matter whether you're installing a mailbox post, building a deck, or planting a tree, these projects require a call to 8-1-1.

Gopher State One Call will notify the right utility companies of the caller's intent to dig. At no charge, professional locators will mark the locations of underground lines with flags, spray paint, or both. Depth of utility lines can change over time because of storms and soil condition.

Customers should contact a private locator company to find lines not owned by a utility. Examples of these include lines installed by a homeowner to heat a pool, light a garage or install a gas grill.

### Safe digging tips

- **Always call 811 before you dig.** It's the law
- **Depth can be deceptive.** Depth of utility lines can change over time with erosion, storms, floods, soil condition, heaving in winter from frost, and changes to landscaping.
- **What you don't know can hurt you.** Even if you've lived in your home for 30 years, things can and do change in your yard.
- **Does it smell like rotten eggs?** If you damage a natural gas line and notice a sulfur or rotten egg-like smell, move quickly away from the area. Once safely away, call 911 first, then your gas utility company to investigate and repair.
- **Hand digging.** Before you can work near an underground utility line, you must first hand-dig to expose the line and verify its location and depth.

Learn more about Xcel Energy's [safe digging efforts](#).

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### About Xcel Energy

Xcel Energy (NASDAQ: XEL) provides the energy that powers millions of homes and businesses across eight Western and Midwestern states. Headquartered in Minneapolis, the company is an industry leader in responsibly reducing carbon emissions and producing and delivering clean energy solutions from a variety of renewable sources at competitive prices. For more information, visit [xcelenergy.com](http://xcelenergy.com) or follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).