

# Massachusetts Safe Excavation Checklist

Use this checklist as your step-by-step guide to help prevent dangerous and costly damage to underground natural gas pipelines and other utilities.

*Always contact your state 811 center before digging and for the most current requirements.*

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Site location: \_\_\_\_\_

Job number: \_\_\_\_\_ 811 ticket number: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. **State law requires you to call 811 or make an online request** for utility locates **at least 72 hours** before any excavation starts, excluding weekends and legal holidays. At no cost to you, **Dig Safe®** will notify member underground facility owners in the immediate area so the location of buried lines can be marked prior to excavation. Allow more time for long, involved projects.
  - Massachusetts: **Call 811 or 1-888-DIG-SAFE (344-7233) | [digsafe.com](http://digsafe.com)**
- 2. **Notify facility owners** who are not members of **Dig Safe** about your excavation and request locates directly from them. (Municipalities and other government entities that own water, sewer and drainage lines are not required to join Dig Safe.)
- 3. **Before notifying 811, pre-mark your dig area** with white paint, flags or stakes, so locators can more easily identify and mark affected utilities. Document your markings with photos or video.
- 4. **Retain your ticket number** and related documentation. Keep this proof of compliance handy at the job site in case of emergency.
- 5. **If your 811 locate indicates you will be working within 15 feet of a high-pressure natural gas transmission pipeline or other critical utility:** Prior to digging, you are required to attend an on-site meeting and/or have contact with qualified National Grid representatives to help reduce the risk of excavation-related damage. National Grid **MUST** be on-site during the excavation.
- 6. **Expect a response from every facility operator** confirming the absence or presence of utility lines in your work area. Document the responses. If you do not get a response, do not dig; call 811.
- 7. **Check the site on your planned excavation date** to confirm that your entire requested dig area has been located and marked. Look for aboveground signs of utilities that have not been marked, such as meters, pipeline markers, valves, pad-mounted transformers, etc. Also check for signs of something buried after the locate was completed, such as a fresh trench. If you find unmarked facilities, stop digging and notify 811 and the facility operator. Never assume an unmarked utility line is abandoned. Always assume lines are in use and present a potential danger.
- 8. **Begin excavation within 30 calendar days of your locate request**, or your ticket will expire. Contact 811 if the excavation will be delayed.
- 9. **Maintain the marks.** You are responsible for maintaining locate marks until your excavation is complete. Document marks with photos or video before you dig. If marks fade or are destroyed, call 811 to request a new ticket so the area can be located and marked again. Stop work until the relocates are done.
- 10. **Respect the tolerance zone.** Do not use mechanical excavation equipment within the “tolerance zone,” which spans the width of a marked utility plus 18 inches from each indicated outside edge. For your safety, use **ONLY** hand tools or vacuum technology within this zone.
- 11. **Visually verify the location and depth of a marked utility line** by carefully digging test holes with a blunt hand tool. When hand digging, approach from the side rather than the top, and do not use sharp probes. Be sure to find the actual facility, not just the tracer wire or warning tape.



**Smell Gas. Act Fast. Be the one to call 911.**

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

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- 12. Locate marks may not be accurate.** If you cannot visually verify the indicated line within the tolerance zone, stop work and notify 811 or the facility operator.
- 13. After visual verification,** you must employ reasonable precautions to avoid damaging buried utility lines.
- 14. If you scrape the coating on a gas pipe or cut a tracer wire,** call National Grid and 811 immediately. Even apparently minor damage can cause the line to fail in the future or become unlocatable.
- 15. Once a natural gas pipeline has been exposed,** excavate around it with caution. Add support if necessary, using materials that will not damage the pipe or its coating. Backfill with care. Consult National Grid for specific backfill rules.
- 16. Use special care to protect cast iron pipelines** from damage. Notify National Grid whenever cast iron gas pipe is exposed or falls within an excavation trench's angle of repose.
- 17. If your equipment contacts a power line, notify 911 and National Grid immediately.** Move the equipment away from the line if you can do so safely. If the equipment cannot be safely moved, stay put until National Grid utility workers signal you off. Warn others to stay far away; anyone who touches the line, the equipment or even the ground nearby may be injured or killed.
  - **If fire forces you off,** jump clear without touching equipment and the ground at the same time. Land with your feet together and shuffle away with small steps, keeping both feet together and on the ground at all times. Once clear, do not return to the equipment until National Grid has declared it safe.
- 18. If you contact a natural gas pipeline and/or suspect a gas leak, assume there's a danger – even if the damage appears minor.** Warn others, leave the area quickly and stay away until utility personnel say it is safe to return. Do NOT use matches, lighters, cigarettes (including e-cigarettes or vape pens) or anything electrical – not even a light switch, phone or garage door opener. A spark from any of these items could ignite leaking gas, causing a fire or explosion. Leave the excavation open and do not attempt to stop the flow of gas. From a safe location, call 911 and National Grid immediately. (Excavators are required by law to call 911 if gas is escaping.) Report the incident to your supervisor.

To report emergencies, **call 911** and National Grid immediately.

## In case of gas emergencies:

911 and 1-800-233-5325:

## In case of electric emergencies:

911 and 1-800-465-1212

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This is an important notice. Please have it translated.

Este é um aviso importante. Queira mandá-lo traduzir.  
Este es un aviso importante. Sírvase mandarlo traducir.  
Avis important. Veuillez traduire immédiatement.

Questa é un' informazione importante, si prega di tradurla.  
ĐÂY LÀ MỘT BÀN THÔNG CÁO QUAN TRỌNG  
XIN VUI LÒNG CHO DỊCH LẠI THÔNG CÁO ẤY

Это очень важное сообщение.  
Пожалуйста, попросите, чтобы  
вам его перевели.