

## Article for 8/12/15

Some things are best simply avoided. A few things immediately come to my mind, like having to call your credit card company. You know you will be on hold forever, it seems! Mega-shopping trips to the mall with young children are another example. I love the idea, and the first couple of hours are fun. After that, it can be like having surgery without anesthesia – simply painful. Like leaving your car for repair, knowing full well that you will not be driving that baby home today, or maybe not even tomorrow. Heck, you may never be able to completely rely on it ever again, in your mind. It may seem like such a good idea to plan the same exact thing again next time, only to have the realization set in that you did the same thing, with the same results.

Now, I'm not trying to depress you! I'm just trying to talk myself into NOT repeating the same failures again and again! However, when you think about the things I've mentioned, they have been uncomfortable or not what I had hoped for, but they were not detrimental, and no live person or animal was really harmed in my attempts!

So, let's talk about something that's really easy to do, not painful at all, but COULD have detrimental results and COULD harm live persons or animals: Failing to call 811 before digging! Anytime you dig! That's right! Calling 811 IS really easy. How do you do it? Simply dial 8, 1, 1 from any phone, and you can expect to answer a few short questions about your intentions BEFORE someone gets hurt!

When do you need to call 811? Perhaps you or someone you know is going to do a little landscaping, add a few trees, maybe a flower bed or two. Do you need to call 811? Yes. One quote I noted is, "With millions of shovels entering the ground near billions of feet of unmarked underground utilities...we continue to see damages occur every few minutes, leading to inconvenient outages, and in worst-case scenarios bodily harm, not just for the do-it-yourselfers, but the entire community." How true. Yes, even the average Joe needs to call 811 several days BEFORE you begin your project. The call center will then arrange for a professional locator to come mark the approximate location of underground utility lines with spray paint and/or flags. Once your project area is marked, it is safe to begin digging around the marked areas. There's a special color-coding system that you will need to be aware of at the site. Avoiding the areas where the utilities are buried is key to having your project be successful!

Texans should visit [www.Texas811.org](http://www.Texas811.org) to get the full story on when and how to call for 811 utility locator services or to report an upcoming project for digging. With everyone's help and making the proper calls, we can hope for a line locate request for every excavation in Texas, and that will help us Be Safe Out There!