

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Fuel Reminds the Public to Call Before You Dig

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, April 2020 poses a different Safe Digging Month

Erie, Pa., April 1, 2020 – In recognition of April as Safe Digging Month, National Fuel is reminding homeowners and professional contractors about the importance of calling 811 before starting a digging project, and, in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC), is urging homeowners to delay the beginning of digging projects during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

As stated by the PUC on March 27, 2020, in the [PUC Recognizes Safe Digging Month, Urges Homeowners to Delay Digging Projects during COVID-19 Emergency Declaration](#) press release:

“While the Pennsylvania One Call (PA One Call or 8-1-1 System) has remained fully operational through this pandemic, we (PUC) join them in asking consumers, businesses and contractors to not begin any non-essential construction,” said PUC Commissioner John F. Coleman Jr. “Delaying the start of non-essential home digging projects can help safeguard our citizens, protect utility crews and avoid accidental damage to underground lines that could disrupt utility services during this extremely stressful time.”

Pennsylvania state law requires residents to call 811 – a free service for homeowners– before digging in order to prevent accidental damage to underground utility lines. Pennsylvania homeowners and contractors should call 811 at least three and no more than 10 business days in advance of the start of their projects. Digging without knowing the approximate location of underground utilities can result in serious injuries, service disruptions and costly repairs.

As always, if you smell gas, leave fast! If a rotten-egg natural gas odor is present, leave the premises immediately and call National Fuel's emergency line, 1-800-444-3130, from a different location. If you smell gas outdoors, call National Fuel's emergency number and provide the address nearest to the site of the odor.

National Fuel recognizes that during these unsettling times there may be instances where customers find themselves facing financial difficulties. Customers whose income situation has changed in the last 30 days may be eligible for LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program), a federally funded programs that provides financial heating assistance to those who qualify. Customers can contact the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, 1-866-857-7095, to discuss eligibility.

Customers who are having trouble paying their bills are encouraged to call Customer Service, 1-800-365-3234, to discuss available payment programs and services. During the COVID-19 pandemic, utility shutoffs have been suspended and late charges for customers impacted will be waived.

National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation is the Utility segment of National Fuel Gas Company, a diversified energy company that is engaged in a number of natural gas-related activities. The Utility provides natural gas service to more than 740,000 customers in Western New York and Northwestern Pennsylvania. For more information, visit www.nationalfuelgas.com.

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