

Dial Before You Dig

Smart, safe digging means knowing what underground services are buried before you begin a project. Underground services can include pipelines, cables, wires and other equipment used by water, gas, electricity and telecommunications service providers. Builders, contractors, ground workers, civil engineers—in fact, anyone digging—should ‘dial before they dig’. This means they should contact utility companies and service providers to find out what underground services are below or near their worksite, and plan their dig accordingly.

Know the Facts

Many liability policies contain exclusions for damage to underground services if you have not made reasonable efforts to check for and locate them. It is not enough to simply ask the land owner, or make an educated guess, about where underground services are located.

Many builders and other workers believe they can tell whether there is anything buried underground based on above ground conditions. In reality, many underground services are not marked as precisely as workers believe. Above ground markers are not usually placed exactly over the item and may not indicate depth. Underground lines often curve to avoid natural or manmade features between markers.

Dialling before you dig and getting accurate records is the only way to truly know what is beneath the ground before you break the earth.

Who Should You Call?

There are many free and pay services that you can call to find out where underground services are located at your worksite. A few common ones are listed below (note that this list is not exhaustive):

- **BT/Openreach** for certain telecommunications underground services—call them at 0800 917 3993 or visit www.openreach.co.uk.
- **Energy Networks Association** for gas and electricity companies. Visit them at www.energynetworks.org.
- **National One Call** is an all-inclusive pay service, but there is a free SelfPlan option. Call 0844 800 9957 or visit www.national-one-call.co.uk.

A number of risks and concerns are associated with underground services when digging. Take simple steps to limit your risk and liability.

Best Practices

Use the following tips to ensure best practices before you dig:

- Obtain all relevant utility plans
- Make sure plans are clear and include all relevant services
- Use and maintain the correct locating devices
- Clearly mark all identified services
- Communicate these locations to all contractors on site who may be involved in digging

Even small jobs require a call, so never take on a project without dialling before you dig.

Provided by Robison & Co Ltd

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In case of an incident, make sure your claim is not refused because you did not properly check for underground services. Contact Robison & Co Ltd to make sure that you are covered properly.