

Introducing  
**811**  
PRESS KIT



## ***Background on Common Ground Alliance***

- **Common Ground Alliance originated as an extension of the Common Ground Study.**

The Common Ground Alliance (CGA) was created in 2000 after the U.S. Department of Transportation released a study addressing the best practices relating to damage prevention. The study, released in 1999, was never intended to be a fixed model, but to evolve as experts learn more and technology advances. The CGA was formed by a federal mandate to continue the development of best practices for damage prevention. CGA is a member-driven organization with more than 1,400 individual members, member organizations and sponsors in 15 stakeholder groups that comprise the underground utility and damage prevention industry. These groups include excavators, locators, road builders, electric, telecommunications, oil, gas, railroad, one call centers, public works, equipment manufacturing & suppliers, state regulators, insurance & engineering/design and emergency services.

- **Common Ground Alliance promotes effective damage prevention practices.**

From its inception, CGA has promoted effective damage prevention practices in order to ensure public safety, environmental protection and the integrity of services. To achieve these goals, CGA fosters a sense of shared responsibility for the protection of underground facilities; supports research; develops and conducts public awareness and education programs; identifies and disseminates stakeholder best practices such as those embodied in the Common Ground Study; and serves as a clearinghouse for damage data collection, analysis and dissemination. The CGA also works with industry stakeholders and regulators to produce stronger, more effective results through partnership, collaboration and the pursuit of common goals in damage prevention.

- **The Common Ground Alliance (CGA) will work with its 1,400 individual members, member organizations, sponsors and 811 campaign national launch partners to reach target audiences.**

The designation of a national 811 “Call Before You Dig” number provides CGA with a unique, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to focus national attention on the importance of calling before digging. CGA will work with its entire network and its national launch partners to reach all aspects of the digging world and educate them on the relevance of 811.

## ***Frequently Asked Questions***

- **Who is CGA?**

The Common Ground Alliance (CGA) is a coalition of 1,400 excavators, locators, road builders, electric, telecommunications, oil, gas, railroad, one call centers, public works, equipment manufacturing & suppliers, state regulators, insurance & engineering/design and emergency services. Officially formed in 2000, CGA represents a continuation of the United States Department of Transportation's Common Ground Study, which highlighted the need for one organization to continuously update best practices among the growing underground utility industry. The Common Ground Alliance was thus formed to prevent damages to underground infrastructure, reduce service disruptions, save lives, and improve safety practices industry-wide.

- **What is the purpose of CGA? How does it achieve its goals?**

CGA works to prevent damage to underground infrastructure by developing best practices for the industry. The organization is also involved in other activities in an effort to achieve this goal. Research & development, data reporting & evaluation and education programs are all important methods CGA uses to promote effective damage prevention practices. In fact, CGA works with its members and industry stakeholders to create effective results through partnership, collaboration, and the pursuit of common goals in damage prevention.

- **What exactly is 811?**

811 is a FCC-designated national N-11 number for homeowners and professional excavators to call before digging. 811 calls will be directed to the local One Call Center and the affected utilities, who will then mark underground lines for free. The national 811 campaign will increase awareness among the public about the importance of having utility lines marked before digging. Digging without calling can lead to severe consequences including harm to those who dig, costly damages to underground infrastructure and utility service disruptions.

- **Don't "Call Before You Dig" numbers already exist?**

There are multiple "Call Before You Dig" numbers established by the existing 62 One Call Centers, or "Call Before You Dig" centers. The national 811 number will eliminate the confusion of multiple numbers while continuing free and easy local service. In fact, in a recent national survey, nine out of ten (89%) professional excavators agreed that calling before to get utility lines marked is a fast and easy process.

- **Why is a national 811 number necessary?**

Those who dig are aware of "Call Before You Dig" services, but often make risky assumptions about where utility lines are buried or when they should call. In fact, a recent national survey showed that only 33% of homeowner do-it-yourselfers called to have their lines marked before starting digging projects. Simple digging jobs can damage utility lines, which can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm diggers, and potentially result in fines and repair costs. 811 will let diggers know what's below when they call before they dig.

- **What is CGA's role in promoting 811?**

CGA's mission is to prevent damage to underground infrastructure. The national 811 number provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to focus national attention on the importance of calling before digging as simple digging jobs can damage utility lines. CGA will work with its members, sponsors, and national launch partners in the 811 campaign to increase awareness about the new number and create positive behavior change.

## ***Background on the 811 campaign***

- **811 is a new federally-mandated FCC designated N-11 number**

The new 811 number is a national “Call Before You Dig” phone number designated by the FCC to eliminate the confusion of multiple “Call Before You Dig” numbers and help save lives by minimizing damages to underground utilities. One easy phone call to 811 quickly begins the process of getting underground utility lines marked. Local One Call Center personnel will then notify affected utility companies, who will send crews to mark underground lines for free.

- **811 will help save lives and protect infrastructure**

Knowing where underground utility lines are buried before each digging project begins helps to prevent injury, expense and penalties. The depth of utility lines may vary and multiple utility lines may exist in one area. Simple digging jobs can damage utility lines and can disrupt vital services to an entire neighborhood, harm those who dig and result in expensive fines and repair costs. Marked lines show those who dig the approximate location of underground lines and help prevent undesired consequences.

- **The 811 campaign will target diggers—professional excavators and do-it-yourself homeowners**

A recent national survey revealed that roughly half of Americans are “active diggers” who have done (or are planning to do) some type of digging project at home, yet only a third have called or will call to get their utility lines marked. CGA member organizations and national launch partners will conduct outreach to increase awareness of the new 811 number, demonstrate its relevance and create positive behavioral change among those most likely to dig.

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