



B R O W N S V I L L E
P U B L I C U T I L I T I E S B O A R D

worker
beware[®]

Work Safely Around Electric Lines

Respect the Power of Electricity

- **When you arrive at a job site, always identify power lines, poles, guy wires, and pad-mounted equipment, and point them out to your crew.**
- **Look for overhead lines** hidden by trees or buildings.
- **Consider *all* overhead lines to be energized and potentially dangerous,** including the service drops that run from utility poles to buildings.
- **Check the site daily** because conditions may change.
- **Review your emergency plan** before work begins so everyone knows what to do in case of power line contact.



worker
beware

For Tools and Equipment Other than Cranes and Derricks Used in Construction, Observe the 10-Foot Rule

- OSHA requires that you keep yourself and your equipment (other than cranes or derricks used in construction) **AT LEAST 10 feet** away from overhead power lines carrying up to 50 kV.
- Higher-voltage lines require greater clearances. Contact Brownsville PUB for clearance information.
- If your job requires you to work closer than 10 feet from power lines, call Brownsville PUB well in advance to make safety arrangements.
- Electrical safety distances given here are minimums.
- Always use the maximum possible clearance, and clearly mark boundaries to keep workers and equipment the required distance away.

Cranes and Derricks in Construction

- **Keep the crane boom and load *at least 20 feet away*** from lines up to 350 kV and **50 feet away** from lines greater than 350 kV but at or less than 1,000 kV. Always assume the line is energized, and allow nothing closer unless you have confirmed with the utility owner/operator that the line has been de-energized.
- **As voltage increases, clearance distances also increase.** Contact Brownsville PUB and consult the OSHA regulations at **www.osha.com** for specific clearance requirements and encroachment prevention precautions.
 - Once you have established the required clearance, mark a safety boundary with tape, signs, or barricades.
- **Whenever cranes or derricks are used on your job site**, contact Brownsville PUB well in advance. They will confirm safety clearances and make any necessary facility protection arrangements.

Use a Dedicated Spotter



- **Always use a dedicated, qualified spotter on the ground** to safely judge distances between hoisting equipment and power lines.
- **Crane and derrick operators:** You must maintain continuous contact with a dedicated spotter to comply with line clearance requirements.
- **The spotter's only responsibility should be power line safety.** Don't divide the spotter's attention with other tasks.

If Your Equipment Contacts a Power Line

- Both the equipment and the line should be considered energized.
- Move the equipment away from the line, if you can do so safely.
- Remain on the equipment.
- Warn others to stay far away.
- Have someone call 911 and Brownsville PUB immediately.
- If fire or other imminent danger forces you off:
 - Do NOT touch the equipment and the ground at the same time.
 - Jump clear, and land with your feet together.
 - Shuffle away with small steps, keeping both feet close together and on the ground at all times. Or hop away on two feet, keeping both feet together.
 - Do not return to the equipment until utility personnel tell you it is safe.
- Never touch fallen power lines or anything they may be contacting.



Notify 811 Before You Dig. It's the Law!



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

- **Dial 811 or enter an online locate request well in advance of digging or moving earth in any way.** This free service will arrange to mark underground utility lines so you can dig safely.
- **Before you notify 811, pre-mark your proposed excavation area with white paint, flags, and/or stakes** so locators can easily identify and mark affected utilities.
- **If you don't notify 811, you risk hitting an underground line.** You, your crew members, or others could be hurt or killed. You may be held liable for any resulting damages, as well as outage and repair costs.

Wait the Required Time

- In Texas, wait two full business days (excluding weekends and legal holidays).
- If you wait the required time and the locate is not completed, do not dig. Notify the 811 service that your locate request has not been fulfilled.



Conduct a Visual Site Survey











- **Do not rely exclusively on the locate marks.** Look for visual indicators of underground facilities that have not been marked.
- **Check with property owners about any private underground lines** that would not have been marked by the locator.
- **Also check for signs of something buried after the locate was completed,** such as a fresh trench.
 - If you find a newly installed or unmarked facility, call 811.

Respect the Marks, and Dig with Care

- **Not all utilities are 811 members.** You are responsible for notifying non-member utilities about your project. Check with 811 for more information.
- **Respect the locator marks.** Maintain utility indicator marks, and follow them when digging.
- **Dig with care.** Exercise extreme caution when digging near buried utilities and have a spotter present to observe the excavation whenever heavy equipment is used.
- **Know the underground utility color code:**

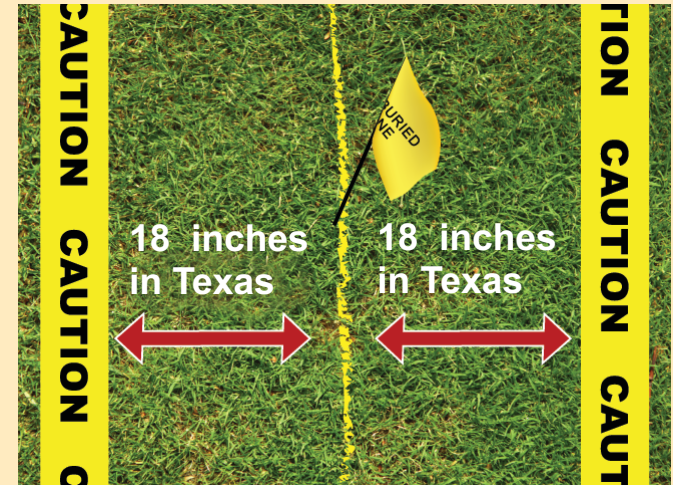
AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION COLOR CODE FOR LOCATOR MARKS



	Electric power lines
	Gas, oil, or steam pipelines
	Communications lines, cables, or conduit
	Potable water
	Reclaimed water, irrigation, and slurry lines
	Sewers and drain lines
	Temporary survey markings
	Proposed excavation

Respect the Tolerance Zone

- **Adhere to state laws for digging within the “tolerance zone.”** This safety area spans the width of a marked utility line plus a state-mandated distance from each indicated outside edge of the line: 18 inches for intrastate and interstate pipelines in Texas.
- **Hand dig prudently in this zone.**
- **Once visual identification has been achieved,** you may use mechanized digging equipment. Use a spotter to observe the excavation and help prevent damage when heavy equipment is used near power lines.
- **The tolerance zone is a *minimum* safety clearance.** Protect yourself by using the maximum possible distance.



Know When to Stop Digging



- If there are no locate marks after you have waited the required time, do NOT dig.
- If you do not understand the locate marks, do NOT dig.
- If you cannot visually verify the location of marked utility lines, STOP digging.
- If you find unmarked, mismarked, or seemingly abandoned facilities, STOP digging.
- If you see signs of something buried after the locate was complete, such as a fresh trench, STOP digging.
- If the marks fade or are destroyed, STOP digging and contact 811 to request a new ticket.

Power Line Safety Review

- Identify all power lines and electrical equipment upon arrival at a job site. Recheck the site daily, and review your emergency plan.
- Keep yourself and all tools and equipment (other than cranes and derricks used in construction) *at least 10 feet away* from *all* overhead power lines carrying up to 50 kV. Always assume that lines are energized.
- Cranes and derricks used in construction must remain *at least 20 feet away* from lines up to 350 kV and **50 feet away** from lines greater than 350 kV but at or less than 1,000 kV. Always assume the line is energized and allow nothing closer unless you have confirmed with the utility owner/operator that the line has been de-energized.
- Always use a dedicated spotter.
- If a power line contact occurs, follow proper safety procedures, and immediately call **911** and Brownsville PUB.
- Notify 811 before you dig. It's required by law.

Contact Information

- In case of an electrical emergency, call **911** and **Brownsville PUB** at **(956) 983-6300**.
- For additional information, visit the Brownsville PUB website at **brownsville.e-smartworkers.com**.



B R O W N S V I L L E
P U B L I C U T I L I T I E S B O A R D

worker
beware[®]

Work Safely Around Electric Lines