



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
EDISON[®]

An EDISON INTERNATIONAL[®] Company

Tips of the Trade



Safely Exposing Buried Utilities



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

In an
Electrical Emergency,
Call 911

For Questions About
Working Near Power Lines
or to Report an Electrical
Safety Hazard, Call SCE at
1-800-611-1911

Haga clic aquí para leer
estos "Consejos del
oficio" en español

You've called 811, you've waited two full working days, and you're sure all buried utility lines on your job site have been located and marked. Now you can use your mechanized equipment to begin excavating, right?

Not so fast. Buried power lines and other facilities can be easily damaged and are dangerous to contact. **Before you can safely cross or work close to an underground utility line with power digging equipment, you must see the line with your own eyes:**

- First, use only hand tools like shovels or other non-intrusive methods to expose the line. **State law requires you to hand expose 2 feet on either side of the underground facility so you know its exact location and depth.**
- Then, and only then, can you begin power digging. **Be sure to work with a spotter whose only job is to keep mechanized digging equipment away from buried facilities.**

Hand Dig with Care

Take care to prevent damage by using a rounded or blunt-edged shovel—and be sure you use a fiberglass shovel when digging around buried electrical lines. Sharp tools like pickaxes, mattocks, pry bars, or pointed spades may gouge or puncture lines.

Start your digging off to the side of the marked utility line. Use a gentle, prying motion to break away soil as you approach the line laterally. **Never pry against a utility line to remove soil, stab at the soil, or stomp on the shovel with both feet.**

Report All Damage

Even a slight gouge, scrape, or dent to a utility line conduit or its coating may interrupt service or cause a hazard. Protect all exposed utility lines and check them regularly for damage. Before you backfill, check them again. **If you contact an underground power line, report it to us, so our crews can inspect the line and make the necessary repairs.**

Protect Yourself

Always wear proper personal protective equipment and take care to prevent muscle strain and fatigue. Don't twist your torso to move the dirt; instead, move your feet to turn your entire body. Alternate shoveling between your left and right sides and take breaks to prevent fatigue.

Would You Like to Know More?

We offer electrical safety materials for contract workers. To request materials, please visit on.sce.com/safetyonthejob.

Is there a subject you would like to see covered? Respond to this [email](#) with your suggestions.

For More Information on Contractor Safety, Visit
on.sce.com/safetyonthejob

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