



Public vs. Private Utilities

What's the difference?

When you contact Virginia 811 about your plans to dig, we notify the utility operators who may have underground utilities in your area. There are over 500 utilities who are "members" of Virginia 811, who have let us know about the areas where they may have underground utility lines. They are often called "public utilities".

"Public Utilities" will mark the approximate horizontal location of underground utilities to the point of consumption. Common examples:

- Natural Gas will be marked to the gas meter, which is usually located on the side of the home or building
- Electricity will be marked to the electric meter, which is usually placed on the side of the home or building
- Communications (telephone and/or cable television) will be marked to the Network Interface Device (NID), which is usually placed on the side of the home or building

The points of consumption for Water and Sewer utilities are different. For water, that point is your water meter. That means that the line that connects your house to the meter is considered "private" and will NOT be marked when you contact Virginia 811.

Similarly, the point of consumption for a sewer line is the sewer cleanout, which is usually located within 5 feet of the edge of the property. The sewer line that connects your house to the sewer main at that cleanout will NOT be marked when you contact Virginia 811.

Other examples of Private Utilities that will not be marked by the utilities notified by Virginia 811:

- Electric lines to out buildings (detached garages or sheds)
- Lines related to satellite or dish television
- Septic tanks and lines associated with them
- Propane tanks and lines associated with them
- Sprinkler systems
- Landscape lighting
- Invisible pet fences

Here's one general rule: If the utility runs from the street to the meter, it will be marked up to the meter. If the utility is installed from the meter to another location on your property, it will not be marked.

For a list of underground utility locating contractors go to:
VA811.com/underground-utility-locating-contractors/
or scan the QR code



To learn more about public vs. private utilities go to:
VA811.com/private-utilities-explained/
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