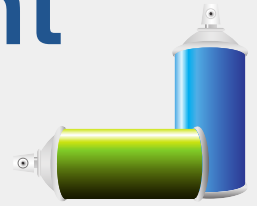


What Do Spray Paint Markings Mean?



All around us, there are important signs and markers that we overlook. It is not hard to go about your day never seeing what someone else does, even if you walk the same path or visit the same park. Have you ever noticed the **spray paint markings** on the sidewalk, roadway, and grassy fields? How about the little colored flags that go along with them? These flags and paint markings are there so construction crews and excavators do not accidentally strike one of the nearly **20 million miles** of pipelines, cables, wires, and water systems underneath your feet every day in America.

Damage Prevention, sometimes called facility safety, is the practice of protecting underground utilities. Many of the things you rely on - drinking water, electricity, natural gas, phone and internet service, and more - are provided by the pipelines and cables under homes, businesses, sidewalks, parking lots, and yards. This is why you should **never** start digging without knowing what is below your feet! Even for a backyard project like building a desk, planting a tree, or digging out deep-rooted weeds with a shovel, it is critical to **call 811** and let them know three days before you want to dig.

That will allow the one-call center to notify the power, internet, natural gas, and other companies with underground utilities in your area to mark the area above their utilities so you can dig safely! The markings are color coded so we know exactly what the risk is before digging. Maybe a **blue line** would ruin your day by flooding that basement foundation you're trying to dig. A **red mark** might mean electrocution or loss of power to the whole neighborhood! But be especially careful about **yellow marks**. These represent natural gas and petroleum pipelines, which can be explosive and deadly if damaged.

On average, five people are hurt or even die from digging into these pipelines in America every month. It is always better to call 811 first, than have to call 911 after an accident! Without x-ray vision, things under the ground will remain unseen. These colored markings are the best way to make them seen for a few days surrounding a digging project. Whether you are a parent, home owner, or construction professional, make sure to respect the color and keep children and the community **safe**.