

## SAFETY BULLETIN: FIRE LINES & PIPELINES

**Summary:** Many types of emergency situations, especially wildland fires, can affect buried utilities. When firefighters use the right-of-way (ROW) to move equipment and build fire breaks/lines, they risk impacting the utility and putting their own crew at risk to be injured. The one call system (811) should be used to notify operators of the need for emergency excavations (fire lines).

### What you need to know:

- A pipeline right-of-way (ROW) is a strip of land of varying widths that may contain one or more pipelines and other public utilities.
- Pipeline ROWs can be identified by pipeline markers located on roads, railways, and other intervals along the ROW. These include the name of the operator, emergency contact information, and a general description of the product in the pipeline. **It's critical to remember sometimes these markers may have been destroyed by the fire.**
- Due to limited obstructions on ROWs, firefighters tend to use them when creating fire lines to slow a fire's progression. **Activity on the ROW, such as crossing with heavy equipment or excavation without proper notification to 811, puts them and anyone in the vicinity in extreme risk of injury or loss of life.**



Photo courtesy of CHS, Inc.

### KEY PUBLIC SAFETY ACTIONS:

- The one call system (811), must be used to properly notify pipeline and utility operators, prior to any soil-disturbing activity—including building fire lines. Operators are required to respond to all emergency locates. Find more information at: [call 811.com](http://call811.com) or [pipelineawareness.org/safety-information](http://pipelineawareness.org/safety-information).
- Maintain open lines of communication between pipeline operators and fire incident command posts.
- Share information with all fire incident commanders and stress the importance of calling 811 to notify utilities of fire line installations to keep responders and infrastructure safe.

## SAFETY BULLETIN: FIRE LINES & PIPELINES



- The above images depict a ROW where a fire line was placed over the top of a 10-inch 1000 psig hazardous liquid transmission pipeline containing gasoline and diesel fuel.
- Pipeline 811 had NOT been contacted by emergency responders. Due to a great working relationship with landowners, this pipeline operator was notified by the landowner.
- In this situation, fortunately, there were no serious consequences. Because no notification was made and lines were not located and marked, emergency responders were at risk of damaging the pipeline line which could have caused personal injuries and environmental impacts.

**ALWAYS CALL OR CLICK 811, KNOW WHAT'S BELOW.**

**IT'S A FREE SERVICE AND AN EXTRA INSURANCE POLICY FOR YOUR SAFETY.**



- Pipeline markers should never be used as a reference for the exact location of a pipeline.
- Markers indicate the approximate—not exact—location of a buried pipeline.
- All pipeline markers provide the name of the pipeline operator, product transported and a telephone number for reporting pipeline emergencies.
- Never assume the depth of a pipeline, as they can be less than 12 inches below the surface due to erosion and other factors.

**SCAN FOR A PDF COPY OF THIS BULLETIN**

**Or visit <https://qrco.de/firelines>**

