There are often deadly hazards lurking underground on excavation sites. Rupturing or breaking underground utilities such as electrical power cables and pipelines can result in serious injuries or even death.

**Here is an Example:** A construction crew was using an auger to dig a hole for anchoring a utility pole support cable. Suddenly the auger hit a small plastic gas line. Escaping gas soon reached a nearby building, where it ignited about 20 minutes later. Four people died and 15 were injured. In addition, three buildings were destroyed and more than a dozen others had extensive damage.

1. Are you familiar with the steps you can take to avoid injury around buried utilities on a work site?

2. Have you ever had contact with buried utilities? If so, what happened?

**Remember this:**

- Before digging, look for paint or flag marking locations of electrical lines. Electrical lines should also have a warning device, such as a range control or limit. You should know how each is marked.
- Review marked-out areas. They may not be exact. If not sure call the utility company to verify before digging.
- Plan to dig by hand when working within 2 feet of a mark-out, to make sure you do not hit a utility line or conduit with heavy equipment. Ask your supervisor to identify the expert who will review the work area before work begins and as needed during your shift.
- When digging, look for signs of previous digging.
  1) Changes in soil types.
  2) Asphalt patches or depressions.
  3) Concrete, plastic, or gravel.

For more information visit OSHA REGULATIONS: 1926.651; 1926.652; 1926.1408