

# Natural Gas Safety Guide

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Telecommunication Relay Services Call: 7-1-1

## Responding to Natural Gas Leaks Safely

### 1 Recognize

- “Rotten egg” sulfur smell\* (which is added for your safety).
- Blowing or hissing sound.
- Dead or discolored vegetation in an otherwise green area.
- Dirt or dust blowing from a hole in the ground.
- Bubbling in wet or flooded areas.
- Flames, if a leak has ignited.

*\*Natural gas is colorless, tasteless and odorless. A “rotten egg” odor is added before delivery so leaks can be detected quickly without special equipment.*

### 2 React

**Leave the area immediately. To leave safely:**

- Do not try to locate the source of the gas leak.
- Do not try to shut off any natural gas valves or gas appliances.
- Do not use anything that could ignite natural gas, including electrical devices, such as light switches, telephones, cell phones and garage door openers.
- Do not start vehicles.
- Do not use an open flame, matches or lighters.
- Do not re-enter the building or return to the area until our employee says it’s safe to do so.

### 3 Report

**Go to a safe location where you can no longer smell gas.**

- Then call 9-1-1 and us at 800-477-5050. We’ll respond anytime, free of charge.
- If you see unusual activity near a natural gas pipeline or facility, call our security team at 800-760-3295.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: Natural Gas Pipelines

We operate and maintain more than 28,000 miles of natural gas pipelines that safely and reliably serve more than 1.8 million customers. To ensure the safety and integrity of our natural gas system, we perform more than 450,000 inspections annually.

Pipeline markers are used to indicate the presence of buried pipelines in the area but don't necessarily show their exact location. Do not remove pipeline markers and please let us know if you see one that is damaged.

As your natural gas provider, we maintain the underground natural gas system from the gas main up to and including your gas meter. A property owner is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the gas lines from your meter to all appliances, called 'beyond the meter.' This includes gas service lines to yard lights, grills, pool and spa heaters, garages, workshops or personal property features. Make sure you know their exact location and that routine maintenance is being performed by a certified professional. These lines must be protected from excavation damage and checked for leaks or corrosion, when applicable.

If you are concerned there is a gas leak, go to a safe location where you can no longer smell gas. Call 9-1-1 first and then us at 800-477-5050. We'll respond 24 hours a day, seven days a week at no charge. If a gas leak or other unsafe condition is found, we must shut off the service until it can be fixed.

Learn more at [ConsumersEnergy.com/Safety](https://www.consumersenergy.com/safety)

## Safety Performance

For more information on our pipeline safety performance visit: [ConsumersEnergy.com/PipelineSafety](https://www.consumersenergy.com/pipeline-safety)

### Did You Know?

If you see an excavation site or someone digging without markings and believe underground lines exist in the area, call MISS DIG at 8-1-1 to place a Concerned Caller Ticket.



## Gas Leaks Can be Caused by:

- Excavating work that results in the rupture, nicking or puncturing of a pipeline.
- Placing extremely heavy materials or equipment over buried pipelines, such as soil piles, outriggers, etc.
- Too much, or not enough, pressure in the gas system.
- Equipment failure or corrosion.
- Water main breaks that weaken roadways and pavement.
- Collapsed buildings that break or damage gas pipelines.
- Fire or an explosion near a pipeline.
- Natural disasters such as floods, tornadoes or earthquakes.
- Excess accumulation of snow and ice on meters, gas pipes, and gas appliance exhaust and combustion air vents. Use care when removing snow and ice.

## Safe Digging Steps

1. It's the law to call 8-1-1 or visit [missdig811.org](https://www.missdig811.org) at least three working days before digging to request underground lines be marked. The call and service are free.
2. Natural gas lines are marked with stakes, flags or paint.
3. Once marked, avoid digging in the pipeline area. If using power equipment, hand dig to expose the pipe. If you have difficulty finding the pipe within 18 inches of marks, stop the work and contact MISS DIG 811 again.
4. Respect the marks and use caution with all other gas facilities such as valve and regulator boxes. Do not place construction materials or equipment within 4 feet of marks.
5. If you hit or nick a pipeline while digging, even if you don't think there is damage, stop and call us immediately at 800-477-5050.



### REMEMBER

Contact MISS DIG 8-1-1 even for routine jobs, such as planting shrubs and trees, replacing a mailbox post or installing a fence, deck or a basketball pole.

Learn more: [ConsumersEnergy.com/DigSafe](https://www.consumersenergy.com/dig-safe)

# Natural Gas Safety Tips

- Natural gas leaks can cause fire, explosions and/or loss of breathable air — especially in confined spaces.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions when installing, operating and maintaining natural gas appliances, including having them inspected by a professional.
- Don't hang items from or allow children to play on indoor natural gas pipes.
- Never use gasoline or other flammable liquids indoors, especially in the same room as a gas appliance or other ignition source.
- After a flood or other disaster, check for odorized gas before entering the area and call for help if you suspect a leak. Replace any appliance that's been submerged in water.
- Never build structures, place heavy materials or disturb soil over a natural gas pipeline.
- Don't remove natural gas meter brackets from buildings or store items like garden hoses on them. Report unattached meters to us at 800-477-5050.

## Carbon Monoxide

- Natural gas appliances also can cause carbon monoxide, known as a silent killer because it is invisible, odorless and mimics common illnesses.
- Install a carbon monoxide alarm that meets current standards on all floors.
- Chimneys and vents for gas appliances must be kept clear for proper venting and to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

## If You Smell Natural Gas (a rotten egg odor):

Go to a safe place. Call 9-1-1 and us at 800-477-5050.

For additional information about safety and customer rights visit [ConsumersEnergy.com/CustomerGuides](https://www.consumersenergy.com/customerguides)

**Consumers Energy**

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