

SAFETY BULLETIN

Responding to Utility Emergencies for First Responders

Consumers Energy
Count on Us®

July 2016

CONSUMERS ENERGY is committed to working with public first responders to ensure the safety of our communities.

To help ensure the safety of your team and the public, we're sharing **some recent near misses** involving first responders and utility emergencies. Please share this information with your team.

- **Fire department used their voltage tester** to test downed wires. Tester showed wires as being dead, and the fire department cut wires at the pole. When a Consumers Energy electric worker showed up, the wires were actually still live at pole, and the voltage tester the fire department used was incorrect. Only utility personnel should move downed wires. Never use a voltage tester to check downed wires and always assume they are energized.

- **Fire department moved live secondary** from a driveway with rubber goods they carry on their apparatus when responding to a downed wire during a storm. Only utility personnel should move downed wires.
- **Fire department showed up to an emergency** where there was a dig-in damage by a contractor. Natural gas was blowing from a line and the fire department squeezed off the line prior to arrival by Consumers Energy. Blowing gas causes static electricity, which is a potential ignition source. Fire departments are not trained or qualified to handle blowing gas. The safest thing is to keep the public back, and let the gas vent into the atmosphere.

**FOR UTILITY EMERGENCIES INVOLVING
CONSUMERS ENERGY FACILITIES, CALL**

800-382-0015

**This number is for emergency responders/9-1-1
dispatch centers only.**

**Assess the hazards of each scene, and watch out
for your safety before assisting others.**

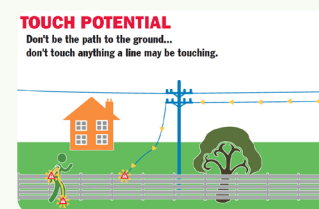
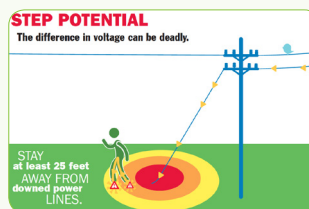
SIGNS OF A NATURAL GAS LEAK

- “Rotten egg” smell
- Blowing or hissing sound
- Dead, discolored vegetation in an otherwise green area
- Flames, if a leak has ignited
- Dirt or dust blowing from a hole in the ground
- Bubbling in wet or flooded areas



NOTE:

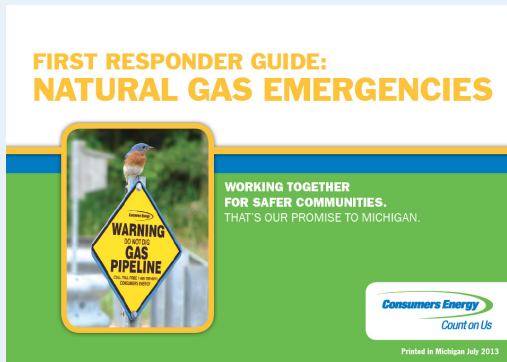
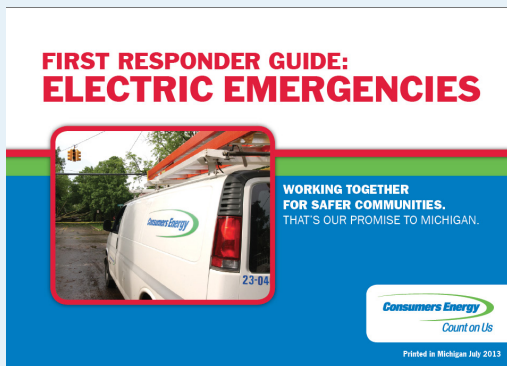
Gas in transmission pipelines is not odorized and will not smell like rotten eggs.



RESPONDING TO AN ELECTRIC EMERGENCY

1. Assume all wires are energized.
2. Always stay 25 feet away from downed power lines.
3. Never touch anything that a power line may be touching.
4. For vehicle accidents involving poles and downed wires, approach the scene slowly, using extra caution at night. From a safe distance, instruct occupants to stay in vehicle and wait for Consumers Energy.
5. Never enter an underground vault or substation. Wait for Consumers Energy to arrive to develop an action plan.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR PUBLIC FIRST RESPONDERS



- **Dedicated Public Safety Outreach team** that provides in-person education sessions for emergency officials on responding to utility-related emergencies.
- **Password protected Emergency Officials portal** that provides access to our system maps (electric/gas), request training, access safety downloads and other resources. The portal also includes hazard awareness videos developed by AEGIS. These awareness videos provide general information on responding to electric and natural gas emergencies.
- **First responder guides** that provide a quick reference for first responders on responding to electric and/or natural gas emergencies.
- **If you have any additional questions** about this Safety Bulletin, would like to request access to the Emergency Officials portal, would like additional copies of our first responder guides or to request training for your department, please contact the Public Safety Team at publicsafety@cmsenergy.com or visit ConsumersEnergy.com/safety.

FIELD PERSPECTIVE

This event occurred about a week after Consumers Energy provided safety training to Larkin Township and Mills Township Fire Departments in Midland County.

THE SCENARIO

A fire department responded to a downed wire that was detached from the utility poles and appeared dead. The emergency responders did not touch the wire, and shut down the road. A Consumers Energy technician arrived on scene and determined it was a live wire.

“What you do is very important. With that training so fresh in our minds, no one touched the wire. And that is a very good thing. It was definitely energized due to an incorrect connection from one of the property owner’s structures to another. The result being that the line was still energized even though totally detached from the utility pole. Had someone touched it, it could have been a disaster.”

**- W. Gary Hardy, Lieutenant/
Training Officer of Larkin Township Fire Department.**

**Call now for free
safety training**

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO!

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WORKING TOGETHER FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES. THAT'S OUR PROMISE TO MICHIGAN.