



**Consumers Energy**  
Count on Us®

# NATURAL GAS SAFETY

WHAT TO DO  
IN AN EMERGENCY

# Responding to Natural Gas Leaks

Knowing how to recognize, react and report natural gas emergencies can help keep you safe.

## 1. RECOGNIZE:

**Signs of a natural gas leak may include:**

- Rotten egg smell
- 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



## 2. REACT:

**Leave the area immediately, without using anything that could ignite the natural gas.**

- Do not use any electrical device, such as light switches, telephones /cell phones, garage door openers
- Do not use an open flame, matches or lighters
- 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 start vehicles
- 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.**

**Call 9-1-1** and then call Consumers Energy at **800-477-5050**, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We will respond at no charge.





## Natural Gas Pipeline Safety

We operate and maintain more than 28,000 miles of natural gas pipelines that safely and reliably provide energy to more than 1.7 million customers.

To protect the integrity of our natural gas pipeline system, we inspect and perform maintenance, such as corrosion-control and leak surveys, and replace sections of pipeline when necessary.

For your safety, our employees are trained to monitor and inspect our pipeline system and respond quickly to any natural gas emergency.

Pipeline markers are used to indicate the presence of buried pipelines in the area. The markers are not intended to show the exact location of the pipelines, or the direction they follow.

**Call us if you see unusual activity near a natural gas pipeline or facility.**

We work with several state and federal agencies to promote safe-digging practices. This helps ensure high-quality pipeline monitoring and maintenance practices in your backyard and across the state.





Know what's **below.**  
**Call** before you dig.

## How to avoid damaging a pipeline

A major cause of pipeline damage is someone accidentally striking an underground pipeline. This is a serious safety threat and can lead to personal harm, physical damages and financial loss.

Excavating contractors and homeowners planning to dig should call **8-1-1** to reach **MISS DIG**, Michigan's one-call system. Call at least three working days before starting any digging project.

Calling 8-1-1 gets free staking of underground utility lines and helps reduce the chance of injury and expense. To know what's below, always call 8-1-1 toll-free before you dig.

MISS DIG requests can also be generated online using the eLocate option at [elocate.missdig811.org](http://elocate.missdig811.org). MISS DIG will contact the utility companies to have their underground lines marked. Gas lines are marked with yellow stakes, flags or paint. **THE CALL AND SERVICE ARE FREE.**

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

Call Consumers Energy right away at **800-477-5050** if you believe you may have hit or nicked a natural gas line.

**NOTE: Underground facilities belonging to the property owner such as electric lines to yard lights, underground sprinklers, and gas lines to barbecue grills will not be staked by utilities responding to a MISS DIG request. Residents are responsible for marking these lines. Contractors are available who can provide this staking service for a fee.**





# Important Natural Gas Safety Facts

- Natural gas is naturally colorless, tasteless, odorless and nontoxic
- A “rotten egg” odor is added to natural gas before delivery to your home so gas leaks can be detected quickly, without special equipment
- Natural gas cannot burn by itself. To burn, natural gas must be mixed with air and have access to an ignition source such as a pilot light, lighted match, or most things with an on/off switch such as indoor lights, cell phones, car motors, garage door openers, etc.
- Burning natural gas will not explode. If natural gas does ignite, do not attempt to put out the flame
- Natural gas is not LPG. Liquefied petroleum gases such as propane, are different than natural gas. They are heavier than air and collect in low places. Natural gas is almost 40 percent lighter than air and rises to the highest unconfined level

## Natural Gas Hazards

We work hard to maintain a safe gas system. However, if not addressed quickly, natural gas leaks could cause fire and/or explosions. Asphyxiation could also result because natural gas can displace oxygen in confined spaces.

### GAS LEAKS CAN BE CAUSED BY:

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



## SAFETY RESOURCES

- [ConsumersEnergy.com/safety](http://ConsumersEnergy.com/safety)
- [missdig811.org](http://missdig811.org)
- **National Pipeline Mapping System**  
[www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov](http://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov)

**Consumers Energy**

*Count on Us®*

