

# Natural Gas Pipeline Safety

## What You Need to Know

Whether you are at home, at work or in a public place, it's likely you are in an area served by natural gas pipelines. More than 2.2 million miles of pipelines and mains quietly, reliably and efficiently deliver natural gas every day for use by residential, commercial and industrial customers.



Like all forms of energy, natural gas must be handled properly. Despite the industry's excellent safety record, a gas leak caused by damage to a pipeline may pose a hazard and has the potential to ignite.

Since pipelines are underground, line markers are sometimes used to indicate their approximate location. The markers display the name of the pipeline operator and the telephone number where the operator can be reached in the event of an emergency.

It is important for you to be familiar with the characteristics of natural gas and be prepared to react quickly and properly to ensure your safety and the safety of your family and coworkers.

### Using Your Senses

A gas leak is often recognized by smell, sight or sound.

**SMELL** - Natural gas is colorless and odorless. A distinctive, pungent odor, similar to rotten eggs, is added so that you'll recognize it quickly. Not all transmission lines are odorized.

**SIGHT** - You may see a white cloud, mist, fog, bubbles in standing water or blowing dust. You may also see vegetation that appears to be dead or dying for no apparent reason.

**SOUND** - You may hear an unusual noise like roaring, hissing or whistling.

### What You Should Do if You Suspect a Leak

- MOVE to a safe environment.
- CALL us immediately.
- DO NOT smoke or operate electrical switches or appliances. These items may produce a spark that might ignite the gas and cause an explosion.
- DO NOT assume someone else will report the condition.
- Provide the exact location, including cross streets.
- Let us know if sewer construction or digging activities are going on in the area.

## Know What You're Digging Into

Whether you are digging a fence post or planting a tree, the greatest risk to underground natural gas pipelines is accidental damage during excavation. Excavation damage accounts for almost 60 percent of all reported pipeline incidents. Even minor damage such as a gouge, scrape, dent or crease to a pipeline or its coating may cause a leak or failure.

To protect pipelines and other underground facilities, the law requires that all excavators contact the One Call Center (811 or 800-272-4480), before excavation work begins on public or private property. The One Call Center will contact the owners of underground facilities in the immediate area so the location of pipelines can be marked prior to excavation. This service is performed at no cost to you.

Underground pipelines often run along a public street, but may also be under private property. The area along each side of the pipeline is known as a right-of-way, which gives the facility owner the "right" to restrict certain activities, even on private property. Right-of-way locations must be respected and are usually marked on maps filed with local municipalities. The One Call Center can provide excavators with specific details regarding precautions required in addition to having the location of underground facilities marked. Failure to comply with the law can jeopardize public safety, result in costly damages and lead to substantial fines.

## Our Commitment to Safety

Safety is the natural gas industry's top priority. The industry spends billions each year to maintain the gas distribution system's excellent safety record. We work with industry peer groups and state regulators on methods and programs designed to ensure the safe operation of the natural gas distribution system. And, as new technologies are developed in pipeline design, construction, inspections, and operations, we will continue to invest in pipeline integrity programs, ensuring safe and secure delivery of natural gas.

A variety of measures are used to ensure pipeline safety, including:

- Coordination with the One Call Center
- Visual inspection programs
- Design and construction techniques
- Workforce training
- Industry safety practices and government oversight
- Pipeline markers and facility mapping
- Public education programs

Training and periodic drills are also conducted with emergency responders to prevent and prepare for emergencies. These exercises test procedures, logistics, communications and more.

Emergency plans and procedures are periodically updated and made available to state authorities.

Additional information can be obtained through the following organizations:

National Pipeline Mapping System  
([www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov](http://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov))

Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration  
(<http://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/comm/GeneralPublic.htm>)

### National Grid

For Gas Emergency Service 24 Hours a Day Call:

*In Brooklyn, Queens  
and Staten Island*  
1-718-643-4050

*In Nassau, Suffolk and  
Far Rockaway*  
1-800-490-0045

[www.nationalgridus.com](http://www.nationalgridus.com)

Call Before You Dig. Contact the  
One Call Center at:  
1-800-272-4480  
[www.nycl1calldsi.com](http://www.nycl1calldsi.com)

Ésta información sobre seguridad es importante. Por favor pida a alguien que se la traduzca o llame al número ubicado en la parte de atrás de este folleto para hablar con un representante de National Grid en español.

**nationalgrid**