

Responding to Natural Gas Emergencies



Natural gas is a common form of energy used in both homes and businesses. Much of that natural gas is transported by a network of underground pipelines. While pipelines are the safest and most reliable way to transport natural gas, accidents can, and sometimes do, occur.

Be Aware of Natural Gas Hazards

- Natural gas alone will not burn, but is flammable in concentrations of approximately 5% to 15% in air and could ignite with a source such as a match, doorbell, telephone or any open flame.
- Natural gas is not toxic. However, suffocation can occur when there are large concentrations of natural gas in enclosed spaces.
- When burned incorrectly, natural gas can produce carbon monoxide (CO) — a very dangerous substance.

Prevention is Key to Community Safety

At Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas, we work hard to ensure our pipelines and communities stay safe and secure. Our prevention measures include:

- Providing training and educational materials to residential customers, contractors and related businesses on safe digging practices.
- Regularly inspecting our natural gas system including patrols, leak surveys and corrosion inspections.
- Keeping our workforce properly trained and qualified.
- Designing pipelines to ensure the safe delivery of natural gas.
- Marking and mapping pipeline facilities.
- Pipeline integrity management programs.
- Working with local emergency responders to help prevent and prepare for emergencies.
- Educating the public on how to prevent, recognize and respond to natural gas leaks.

Make the Right Call

Call Peoples Gas, North Shore Gas or the local gas company anytime you smell a gas odor or if you have reason to believe a pipeline has been damaged.

Peoples Gas

24-Hour Gas Emergencies **866-556-6002**

North Shore Gas

24-Hour Gas Emergencies **866-556-6005**

Recognize Unsafe Areas

Signs of a natural gas leak include:

- Unexplained areas of dead vegetation where the surrounding area is green.
- Distinct natural gas odor similar to rotten eggs.
- Blowing sound or bubbling in a wet or flooded area.
- A meter dial that continues to move after all natural gas appliances and equipment have been shut off.

Use a proper detection instrument to determine if natural gas is present:

- Turn the instrument on in clean air. Sample near the ceiling as you enter. If the instrument registers the presence of natural gas, evacuate the area immediately and call Peoples Gas, North Shore Gas or the local gas company.
- If there are no detection devices available, use your nose. If you smell natural gas, assume that the situation is dangerous and evacuate the area.

Take Control

Like your organization, Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas regard public safety and environmental protection as the top priority in responding to an emergency. **If a natural gas leak is suspected or known:**

- Evacuate the area immediately. Protect human life first.
- Call Peoples Gas, North Shore Gas or the local gas company immediately.
- Eliminate or control all ignition sources.
- If safe to do so, turn off the gas at the source.
- Ventilate the suspect building by leaving doors and windows open as you exit.
- Follow instructions provided by gas company employees.

Locate Buried Pipelines

Pipeline Markers

Remember, if you are responding to a 911 call that may involve energy facilities, approach the scene with caution. Look for clues that a pipeline is involved such as a pipeline marker.

Pipeline Mapping Systems

To determine where pipelines are located in your community, visit the National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS) website at www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov and search by your county or zip code.

High Consequence Areas

In accordance with federal regulations, some segments along transmission pipelines have been designated as High Consequence Areas. High Consequence Areas are those areas through which pipelines pass that would be most affected by an unintentional incident. Some examples of High Consequence Areas include, but are not limited to, stadiums, recreational areas, religious facilities, office buildings, community centers, stores, hospitals, schools and day-care facilities. It is important that you are aware of any High Consequence Areas nearby as they may require special attention in an emergency situation.

Gas and Pipeline Permanent Markers

Gas and pipeline transmission companies use the following types of permanent markers to indicate the presence of gas lines in the area. These markers are not always located directly above pipelines, which is why it is important to Call **312-744-7000** or **811** before you dig. Most markers contain the pipeline operator name and emergency number. If you come across a damaged marker, please report the damage to Peoples Gas or North Shore Gas at **800-328-8700**.



flat pipeline marker post



round pipeline marker post



pipeline casing vent

Above Ground Facility Information

Regulator stations and other above ground facilities may pose dangers different from underground pipelines. For location and description of these types of facilities in your territory, please contact Peoples Gas or North Shore Gas at **800-328-8700** and ask to speak to a safety representative.

For More Information

For additional safety information or to inquire about safety training opportunities, please call Peoples Gas or North Shore Gas at **773-542-7977** and ask to speak to your Peoples Gas or North Shore Gas Utilities Safety Representative.