

# Your Guide to Natural Gas Safety



Pipelines are the safest method of transporting natural gas and petroleum products. You can help maintain the safety of the natural gas pipeline system in your area by reading and keeping a copy of this important safety fact sheet.

## PLAN AHEAD, STAY SAFE

- ▶ **Call 811 before you dig.** It's for your safety and it's New Jersey law to obtain mark-outs for underground utility lines before every digging project - no matter the size. Call **8-1-1** or visit **call811.com** at least 3 business days in advance. Professionals will come and mark out lines, then you can safely and carefully begin digging.
- ▶ **Maintain gas lines and meters.** Elizabethtown Gas is responsible for maintaining gas lines to the meter at your home, but you are responsible for maintaining lines within your home and their connections to appliances. Know where lines are located to avoid damages and regularly inspect exposed lines and connections. Call a professional if you suspect a problem. Also, keep your meter carefully cleared of snow and debris.
- ▶ **Natural disasters.** A natural disaster can impact your natural gas piping, meter and connectors, or flood your natural gas appliances. If your meter is submerged please call us at **1.888.766.9900** to inspect and possibly replace it. If an appliance has been submerged, do not attempt to operate your appliance until it has been inspected by a licensed contractor.
- ▶ **Water heater safety.** The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission urges you to lower your water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Always hand-test water before using, especially when bathing children and infants.
- ▶ **Cross bore safety.** When underground infrastructure is installed using trenchless technology, it sometimes causes gas lines to be installed through sewer lines outside a home or business. This is called a cross bore. These unintended pipe intersections might go undetected for years without causing a problem, but a gas bore breach can fill a house with gas within minutes. Please carefully **read the signs of a gas leak below**. To prevent damaging a potential cross bore gas line when clearing a sewage blockage, it is best to use a licensed professional with a video inspection camera before using a power tool to clear a sewer line.
- ▶ **Excess flow valves.** An excess flow valve (EFV) is a mechanical device installed inside a natural gas distribution service line between the street and residential meter that enhances the safety of your natural gas service. If there is a significant increase in the flow of gas (e.g., due to a damaged line), the EFV will "trip" or close to minimize the flow of gas through the service line. Elizabethtown Gas continually installs EFVs throughout our system, but not every house has an EFV installed at this time.

To learn more visit [elizabethtowngas.com/safety](http://elizabethtowngas.com/safety).

## SIGNS OF A GAS LEAK



**SMELL** - Rotten eggs. ▶ ▶ ▶



**LOOK** - Bubbling water, blowing dirt, dead or discolored plants or grass, frozen ground in warm areas.



**LISTEN** - Quiet blowing, hissing, loud roar.

## What to do if you smell gas:

- 1 Evacuate the area immediately.** Don't use any electric switches, cell phones, matches, doorbells, motor vehicles or electrical equipment until evacuated from the area.
- 2 Call 911.**
- 3 Call the Elizabethtown Gas leak hotline at 1.800.582.7060**, once you're in a safe place, away from the area of the suspected leak. Stay away until emergency personnel indicate it's safe to return.

## CARBON MONOXIDE - WHAT IS IT? HOW DO I DETECT IT?

Carbon Monoxide, or "CO" is an odorless, colorless, tasteless gas that can be fatal. The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain and confusion. If you suspect Carbon Monoxide exposure: **LEAVE THE AREA IMMEDIATELY**, call 911 and seek medical attention.

### Protect your home.

Your best defense is prevention. Install a CO detector in your home and check or replace the battery regularly. A good time is when you change the time on your clocks each spring and fall.



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



## ▶ AWARENESS OF HAZARDS

Pipeline markers are located in the right-of-way and indicate the approximate location, but not the depth, of certain buried pipelines. These can be found at road crossings, fence lines and street intersections. The markers display the product transported in the line, the name of the pipeline operator and a telephone number where the operator can be reached in the event of an emergency.

## TRANSMISSION PIPELINE LOCATION INFORMATION

Transmission pipelines are the main arteries of natural gas infrastructure, transporting gas at greater pressure than the distribution system. To view and download maps of transmission pipelines in your area, see the National Pipeline Mapping System website, [npms.phmsa.dot.gov](http://npms.phmsa.dot.gov).

## ONE-CALL REQUIREMENTS

State laws require you to maintain a minimum clearance, or Tolerance Zone, between the point of excavation and a marked pipeline. In New Jersey, the Tolerance Zone is **two feet** horizontally from the outside wall of any marked underground facility. Even the most minor damage to a pipeline can have serious consequences. If you cause or witness even minor damage to a pipeline or its protective coating, do not cover it up or attempt to repair the pipeline. Evacuate the area, call 911 and Elizabethtown Gas immediately.

## PROPANE SAFETY

Even though propane is not toxic, it may lead to asphyxiation or ignite near a spark. Some New Jersey homes are serviced with propane instead of natural gas. **Here are a few key differences between propane and natural gas:**

- Propane is heavier than air and will not dissipate into the atmosphere like natural gas.
- Propane will turn into a vapor and travel along the surface of the ground collecting in low-lying areas.
- Propane delivered through pipelines has a slightly different odor than natural gas; although, it still smells similar to rotten eggs or sulfur.
- Propane leaks can appear as a dense white cloud of fog, while natural gas leaks are colorless.

Natural gas appliances **SHOULD NOT** be used with propane unless a qualified service technician has made required adjustments to the appliance. If you suspect a propane leak, **EVACUATE** the area and call 911.

## AWARENESS IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

- ▶ Understanding the One-Call requirements and damage prevention laws in your area by utilizing the website: [nj1-call.org](http://nj1-call.org)
- ▶ Reporting any suspicious activity or unauthorized excavation taking place near pipelines or facilities by calling 911 and the pipeline company. Signs of suspicious activity include:
  - Anyone inquiring about security status, personnel and vehicles or attempting to acquire official vehicles, uniforms or identification/access cards, company facility, operations, etc.
  - Attempts to circumvent security measures.
  - Fencing that has been cut or fence ties that have been broken, including any tampering of locks on gates, buildings or storage facilities.
  - Items left in areas where they don't belong, i.e. backpacks, boxes, etc.

## ▶ UTILITY COLOR CODE

This chart corresponds to the marks/flags you'll see when a markout is performed. The color codes relate to the type of underground utility.

|        |                     |
|--------|---------------------|
| RED    | ELECTRIC            |
| YELLOW | GAS, OIL, STEAM     |
| ORANGE | COMMUNICATIONS      |
| BLUE   | PORTABLE WATER      |
| PURPLE | RECLAIMED WATER     |
| GREEN  | SEWER/DRAINAGE      |
| PINK   | SURVEY MARKS        |
| WHITE  | PROPOSED EXCAVATION |

Para obtener una versión en español de esta información de seguridad, visite [elizabethtowngas.com/seguridaddelgas](http://elizabethtowngas.com/seguridaddelgas)