

## Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

As with any other fuel, when natural gas is burned without enough air supply, or without adequate venting, it can produce carbon monoxide, a poisonous, colorless, tasteless and odorless gas. The symptoms are flu-like. Dizziness, headaches and nausea are early symptoms. If you think someone is suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning, get them to fresh air and seek medical help.

### *Some suggestions to guard against carbon monoxide poisoning:*

- Use only fuel burning equipment that is designed to operate indoors.
- Make sure fuel-burning equipment is maintained and operated safely.
- Keep flues and chimneys free of debris and clear of soot build-up.
- Consider installing a carbon monoxide detector near sleeping areas.

## Call Before You Dig

### *Avoid Careless Damage and Accidents*

Digging can be dangerous and costly without knowing where underground facilities are located. Maine law requires **ANYONE** using powered equipment to penetrate the ground (**including private property**) to **FIRST**:

1. Pre-mark the boundaries of the proposed area of excavation with white markings.
2. Call **1-888-DIG-SAFE** (1-888-344-7233) 3 business days prior to digging. Dig Safe will then notify all its member utilities that own underground facilities in the area of the excavation so they can mark their facilities.

## Safety Reminders

### *Keep your gas appliances operating safely...*

- Keep forced-air furnace filters clean.
- Have a licensed heating professional perform an annual check of your natural gas heating equipment.
- Never use range-top burners or ovens for home heating purposes.
- Keep dryer exhaust piping free of lint buildup.

Never keep flammable liquids or combustible material near your furnace or water heater, vent pipe or any ignition source.

## Safety Review Checklist

### *Simple Rules for Natural Gas Safety*

1. Use your senses to detect the signals of a possible leak—look, smell, and listen.
2. Evacuate the area where the leak is detected and stay away until officials tell you it's safe to return.
3. Call **Dig Safe** at **1-888-DIG SAFE** to locate underground lines before digging with powered equipment.

If you detect a leak, **call 911** and the **Maine Natural Gas Emergency Number at 1-877-532-5636.**



**MAINE  
NATURAL GAS**

# PUBLIC SAFETY GUIDE

**For Gas Emergency  
or  
Gas Odor  
Call: 1-877-532-5636**

## Natural gas has an outstanding safety record...

Natural gas pipelines are the safest method of transporting energy according to data supplied by the U.S. Department of Transportation. This excellent safety record is the result of extensive industry safety programs, overseen by federal and state regulatory agencies. Natural gas is a safe and reliable fuel if used correctly. Helping you learn how to use natural gas safely is one of our top priorities.

Natural gas is comprised mostly of methane. Methane is a flammable gas formed deep in the earth. It is lighter than air, and thus, can rise and dissipate into the air if not confined. It is non-toxic and in its pure state, odorless and colorless.

More than 60 million households in the United States rely on natural gas to heat their water, cook their food, dry their clothing, and heat their homes. It burns cleaner than other fossil fuels, minimizing the impact on our environment. More and more people are turning to energy sources, like natural gas, that are economical, plentiful and better for the environment.

## Mercaptan: The odor of natural gas

### *Learn to Detect Gas by Smell*

A harmless chemical odorant called mercaptan is added to natural gas to make it smell like sulfur or rotten eggs. This odor will help you detect gas leaks that might occur in your business, home or neighborhood. As you learn about natural gas safety, you'll find it's important to use your senses....your eyes, nose and ears will serve you well. They'll help you remain alert to potential dangers.

## Leak Detection

### *Outdoors*

Our underground distribution pipelines are the safest and most-efficient method available for delivering natural gas to your homes or businesses. These lines are designed, installed, tested, and maintained to meet every federal, state, and industry code and regulation. These tips can help you spot a natural gas leak outdoors:

- If you SEE dirt blowing from a hole in the ground.
- If you SEE continuous bubbling in one spot in wet or flooded areas.
- If you SEE dead or discolored vegetation near a pipeline (like brown patches in a green field).
- If you SMELL an odor that has the distinct scent of sulfur or rotten eggs.
- If you HEAR a roaring or high-pitched hissing sound.
- Fire apparently coming from the ground or burning above the ground.

### *If you detect a leak outdoors, here's what to do:*

1. **Leave the area immediately.**
2. Call 911 or the Maine Natural Gas emergency number at 1-877-532-5636.

Your local emergency authorities and natural gas company personnel know what to do in these situations.

## Leak Detection

### *Indoors*

Your nose is your best friend in detecting potential leaks indoors. Inside any building, business or residence, trust your nose to help you identify a potential problem. If you SMELL an odor that has the distinct scent of sulfur or rotten eggs, there may be a leak and you need to be prepared to take action.

### *If you detect a leak indoors, here's what you do:*

1. **Get out immediately**, clear all occupants from the structure.
2. Once outside call 911 or the Maine Natural Gas emergency number at 1-877-532-5636.

### **Very important tips:**

1. Do not use, turn on, or turn off anything that might create a spark, such as matches, lighters, light switches, phones (including cell phones), flashlights, or any electrical equipment, even computers. Even the tiniest spark from these devices could ignite the natural gas.
2. Do not attempt to locate gas leaks.
3. Once you leave the building, do not return to the structure until it has been examined, the necessary steps have been taken to correct the problem, the area has been declared safe by emergency or natural gas company personnel, and you have been authorized to re-enter.