

Natural Gas Safety

Natural gas is an efficient, low-cost fuel, and it's in abundant supply in our state: Nature's miracle fuel heats our homes, cooks our meals, cleans and dries our clothes, produces hot water on demand, lights our yards, and even powers vehicles. It benefits our environment as well-natural gas is the cleanest and most efficient source of energy available. The City of Buckley owns and operates its own municipal natural gas system for delivery's to gas customers. This is accomplished with a system of distribution pipelines that are located all over the City. You may come in contact with any of our lines, and you need to beware of safety measures related to each.

Mercaptan: The Odor of Natural Gas

Learn to Detect Gas by Smell: In its natural form, gas is odorless and invisible. We want you to be able to detect gas by smell, so we add a very foul odorant called mercaptan. It's a distinct, skunk-like odor that smells like sulfur or rotten eggs.

As you learn about natural gas safety, you'll find it's important to use your senses -- your eyes, nose and ears serve you well. They'll help you remain alert to potential dangers.

Leak Detection

Outdoors: Our underground pipelines are the safest and most-efficient method available for delivering natural gas to your burner-tip. Larger lines across the state are clearly marked with signs so you can be aware they're in the area. The lines are designed, installed, tested, and maintained to meet every federal, state, and industry code and regulation. They are constantly monitored and inspected to locate and fix potential problems in advance.

If you're near a natural gas pipeline, these tips can help you spot a natural gas leak outdoors:

- If you SEE dirt or water blowing into the air, or notice standing water continuously bubbling, there may be a leak. You also can look for discolored vegetation (like brown patches in a green field), or you might notice dry spots in a moist field.
- If you SMELL an odor that has the distinct scent of sulfur or rotten eggs, there may be a leak.
- If you HEAR a loud roaring or high-pitched hissing sound, there may be a leak.

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

- Leave the area immediately.
- Call 911 then notify the City of Buckley PW Department at (360)-829-1631.

Your local emergency authorities know how to respond to these situations. We work diligently to minimize and eliminate any danger. It's our job to find and terminate the leak as quickly as possible.

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. Leave the building immediately; leaving the door open and any windows that may already be open.
2. Call 911 then notify the City of Buckley PW Department at (360)-829-1631.

Three Very Important Tips:

1. Extinguish all smoking materials.
2. Do not turn on or off an electrical switch or appliance of any kind.
3. Once you leave the building, do not return to the structure until it has been examined by a City of Buckley Natural Gas representative, the necessary steps have been taken to correct the problem, the area has been declared safe, and you have been authorized to re-enter.

Call Before You Dig

Avoid Careless Damage and Accidents: Washington law requires utilities and line owners to register their underground facilities - and for excavators to contact every potentially affected operator before they start to dig. Excavators include fence builders, swimming pool contractors, and landscapers. Homeowners who do this type work themselves may also be considered excavators. Anyone digging in the vicinity of a pipeline should use the free statewide system at the Utility Notification Center at 1-800-424-5555 to be sure they know where they can safely dig. A full explanation of state laws and instructions are available at the Utilities Underground Location Center Web site at www.callbeforeyoudig.org.

A "locate request call" sets the following process in motion:

1. Operators with underground facilities in the vicinity of the planned excavation are notified by One-Call Center. This includes natural gas and power utilities, communications companies, and cities and towns.
2. Operator crews or their subcontractors either mark their underground facilities or tell the excavator they have no lines in the area.
3. Excavators or homeowners can recognize the type of line marking on a site by using the following color code:

Red	= Electric	Yellow	= Gas, oil or steam
Orange	= Telephone or television	Blue	= Water
Green	= Sewer and Drain Lines	White	= Proposed excavation
Pink	= Temporary survey markings		

Pipeline Safety Considerations

- When planning your landscaping projects, avoid planting trees or large shrubs near your gas meter. As the tree grows, it can exert forces on your meter setting which could result in damage to the gas pipeline facilities.
- You can help enforce safety laws, by helping the City halt any work from contractors you are using who do not use the One-Call system. For example, if your fence or pool contractor starts digging before you see any paint or flags in your yard, you will know he probably is not complying with the One-Call law. By notifying the City and/or halting the contractor from conducting any excavation work, you will be

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protecting your own property by preventing damage to gas, electric, water, and communication facilities.

Carbon Monoxide

Important Information About this Airborne Poison : Carbon Monoxide - an airborne poison that kills about 250 people each year in the United States, and seriously affects the health of many more. Carbon Monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that can occur when coal, wood, propane, kerosene, or natural gas are improperly or incompletely burned.

That can happen in a number of different ways. For example, when a heater, stove or furnace is malfunctioning, when a charcoal cooker is used indoors without adequate ventilation, or even when a bird's nest clogs your chimney!

Symptoms of CO Poisoning: People exposed to carbon monoxide usually compare their reaction to common symptoms of the flu. Light or early exposure to the gas may cause you to have a headache, experience drowsiness, get a ringing sensation in the ears, become nauseous, or have blurred vision or chest pains. You may even feel like you're going to faint. If you experience these symptoms remove yourself to an outdoor, well ventilated area and call 911.

Heavy or prolonged exposure gets much worse. You can lose consciousness and have convulsions that can cause brain damage and even death.

Protecting Yourself

1. Make sure each and every one of your household gas appliances is correctly installed, and have them checked annually for continued safety.
2. Have your chimneys cleaned and checked every year for obstructions.
3. Don't cook with charcoal indoors except on grills especially designed for indoor use. These grills have a built-in exhaust system that carries away smoke and fumes.
4. Never start your car and allow it to warm up in a closed garage. This is the leading source of fatal carbon monoxide poisoning incidents. Always open your garage door when you start the engine. And just to be safe, follow safety advice and let the car warm up outside the garage.

Safety Checklist

Keep it Handy: Living with natural gas is easy, convenient and safe -- especially when you follow the tips on the safety checklist. Please keep the rules close by. You might put them on your refrigerator where they'll serve as a daily reminder to live safely.

Simple Rules for Natural Gas Safety

1. Use your senses to detect the signals of a possible leak -- look, smell and listen.
2. If you find a leak, contact your local fire and police department (911) immediately.
3. Evacuate the area where the leak is detected and stay away until officials tell you it's safe to return.

4. Locate underground lines before digging starts on your property. Call Utilities Underground Location Center at 1-800-424-5555.
5. Have gas appliances and fireplace chimneys checked every year to be sure they're working properly.
6. Install at least one carbon monoxide detector in your home that carries the approval of the American Gas Association, Gas Research Institute and U.L. listed.
7. Follow instructions for care of your gas service meter.

Meters

Care of your meter: Your natural gas meter measures the amount of natural gas you use. It's also the point where natural gas enters your home or building. To ensure your meter's accuracy, accessibility and safety, follow these suggestions:

- Don't attach anything to your meter (or gas piping) — clotheslines, dogs on leashes, skipping ropes, etc.
- Don't store or lean anything against your meter or piping.
- Be sure your meter is visible and accessible for maintenance and emergency crews — don't enclose it in any building or deck.
- When digging around your meter, dig by hand. Keep the area clear of plants and landscaping. Keep in mind that if you damage any of this equipment, you may be responsible for the cost of repairs.
- Keep snow and ice off your natural gas meter.
- When shoveling snow or using a snow blower, don't pile snow against or on your meter or pipes.
- Keep your eaves troughs and roof overhangs clear.
- NEVER kick or hit your gas meter or piping to remove built-up ice. Call City of Buckley Natural Gas Department at (360)-829-1631.
- Know where your gas meter's shut off valve is (normally located at your meter) and how to turn your meter off.

How to turn off our meter: You can turn your gas off at the main shut-off valve on the inlet pipe next to your gas meter.

Using a wrench or other suitable tool, give the valve a quarter turn in either direction so that it is crosswise to the pipe (see diagram).



CAUTION! Once the gas is shut off at the meter, DON'T try to turn it back on. Only a certified gas technician can turn the gas on safely. Call City of Buckley Natural Gas Department at (360)-829-1631 or any qualified gas fitter to restore gas service.

If leaking gas starts to burn, **“DO NOT”** try to put the flame out. Leave immediately and call 911 then the City of Buckley Natural Gas Department at (360)-829-1631.