

Natural Gas & Pipeline Safety

Tips to Know, Use, & Share



Stay safe and smart around natural gas by recognizing signs, preventing pipeline damage, and reporting natural gas odors or leaks promptly.

Natural gas is an environmentally friendly fuel that provides a source for dependable heat, cooking, drying, warmth, and value across many sectors. While we deliver natural gas as safely, reliably, and efficiently as possible, there are precautions everyone can take to help keep our community safe around natural gas.

Know what's below. Call before you dig.

It's Free & Required by Law

Damage to underground infrastructure can result in costly repairs, injury, property damage, service disruptions, project delays, and state and federal fines. Regardless of the size or scope of your project, before you begin any digging, grading, or excavating, you're required by law to have underground infrastructure marked.

Following the easy steps below shows you care to protect yourself, your family and your community:

C

CALL 811 at least three business days before any digging begins to submit a location request.

A

ALLOW the required time (72 hours) for marking or proceed when advised of clearance.









R

RESPECT the marks as indicated by the APWA Uniform Color Code.

E

EXCAVATE or dig carefully. Use hand tools 24" on either side of the locate marks (tolerance zone) to expose the exact location of infrastructure.

APWA Uniform Color Codes

White		Proposed Excavation
Pink		Temporary Survey Markings
Red		Electric, Cables, Conduit, or Lighting Cables
Yellow		Gas, Oil, Steam, Petroleum, or Gaseous Materials
Orange		Communications, Alarm/Signal Lines, Cables or Conduit
Blue		Potable Water
Purple		Reclaimed Water, Irrigation and Slurry Lines
Green		Sewer, Drain Lines

Be Aware

Natural gas is safely transported and distributed via an underground system of pipelines throughout our nation and our community. These pipelines are an essential part of the nation's infrastructure as they transport one-fourth the energy consumed in the US via underground networks. While they are a safe, reliable method of delivery, pipeline companies and local distribution companies like Jackson Energy Authority work to maintain the safety, reliability, and security of our natural gas distribution system.

The natural gas distributed by Jackson Energy Authority is 100% domestically produced and travels via pipeline to our service area where it reaches over 30,000 customers in Jackson and parts of Madison County by way of over 800 miles of gas main.

Characteristics of Natural Gas

- Composed primarily of methane gas
- Lighter than air, burns clean, and if released, rises and dissipates into the atmosphere
- Naturally colorless, tasteless, odorless, and non-toxic
- By itself, will not burn but if the proper mix of gas and air is combined with an ignition source, combustion can occur
- Burning natural gas will not explode and should be safely extinguished by eliminating the fuel source

The Smell of Natural Gas

Since natural gas has no smell in its natural state, an odorant that resembles the smell of rotten eggs (called Mercaptan) is added to help make leak detection easier. The odor is a warning indicator that natural gas may be present and if ignited could result in personal injury or property damage.

Practice Safety First

Always keep gas appliances, vents, and chimneys clear of debris and blockages. Do not store flammable liquids near gas appliances with pilot lights. An active pilot light on an appliance can provide an ignition source for unseen vapors from flammable liquids like gasoline or kerosene. The vapors are heavier than air and can move along the floor away from the original source by air currents coming from other rooms. To get a pilot light checked or gas appliance safety inspection scheduled, call 731-422-7500 to make an appointment. The service is free and could help prevent any safety issues.

Identify

How to Identify Pipelines

Because pipelines are usually buried underground, signs or markers are used to indicate the general, **not exact**, location. Never rely solely on the presence or absence of pipeline markers as they could have been removed or moved. Always remember the following:



- Pipeline markers do not indicate depth or pressure of the pipeline.
- Pipeline markers are commonly found at road crossings, fence lines, street intersections and rural areas.
- Pipelines may not follow a straight course between markers.
- Damage to or willful removal of the markers is a federal offense and subject to a fine or imprisonment.
- The marker indicates the type of pipeline, the emergency contact information of the pipeline operator and the One Call telephone number.

For information on the location of all transmission pipelines in the United States, visit the National Pipeline Mapping System www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov/PublicViewer. The maps only indicate general locations of pipelines and should not be used as a substitute for calling 811 before digging.

Signs of a Leak

Gas leaks are extremely rare and can be caused by excavation damage, material defects, corrosion, worker error or events of nature. Despite the fact that an odorant is added, your sense of smell should not be the only way to detect gas leaks. The best way to recognize leaks is by using your sense of sight, smell, and hearing.



LOOK FOR: Persistent bubbling in dirt or standing water, dirt blowing into the air, frost ball in an open field, dead/dying or discolored vegetation, sinkholes or exposed pipes.



SMELL FOR: Strong, unusual odor resembling rotten eggs, sulfur, a skunk, or a dead animal.



LISTEN FOR: Hissing, roaring, or whistling

Protect

What to Do If You Smell Gas or Suspect a Leak

STEP 1

Remain Calm and Immediately Evacuate the Facility, Area (Including Pets), Vehicle, or Equipment on Foot, Not Vehicle

- If inside a facility, move outside away from and upwind of the suspected smell or leak.
- If outside, move away from and upwind of the suspected smell or leak.
- DO NOT smoke, strike a match or lighter, or light a candle.
- DO NOT light a candle or use a flashlight.
- DO NOT use a telephone or cell phone; operate lights or electric switches; use a flashlight; pull plugs from outlets; or anything that could cause a spark.
- DO NOT start or restart motor vehicles or electrical equipment in the area.
- DO NOT re-enter a building or the suspected area until cleared by the proper authorities.

STEP 2

In a Safe Place Far Away From the Smell or Suspected Leak, Call Jackson Energy Authority at 731-422-7500 or 911

Provide specific details on the call, such as address, location or any construction activity going on in the area,

- DO NOT send messages via text, email, or social media about the leak or smell.
- DO NOT assume someone else has called about the leak or smell.

STEP 3

Do Not Attempt to Find the Source or Fix the Suspected Leak

DO NOT try to shut off any natural gas valves, meters, or gas appliances - leave that to the experts.

The Proper Flame



A healthy, properly burning flame on gas appliances (excluding gas logs) should be blue in color, sometimes with a tiny tip of yellow, with a little light blue triangle at the center. An orange or yellow flame indicates an improper ratio of oxygen for combustion. Improper combustion could cause too much carbon monoxide (CO) to be produced so it is imperative for a qualified professional to check.



Detecting Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless, tasteless gas formed when fuels like charcoal, coal, gasoline, kerosene, natural gas, oil, propane, and wood are burned without a sufficient supply of air. It can be present in your home due to improperly working fuel-burning appliances, improper installation or venting, poor maintenance, or other appliance misuse.

To help protect you and your family from carbon monoxide, have carbon monoxide detectors in your home and check to make sure they're working properly. Other prevention measures include scheduling annual maintenance checks by qualified technicians for your fuel-burning appliances and having your fireplace/chimney checked annually. The best CO prevention is a natural gas safety inspection performed by a trained service technician. To schedule an inspection by a Jackson Energy Authority trained service technician, please call 731-422-7500.

Signs of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Exposure to carbon monoxide can cause symptoms similar to the flu. Warning signs include headache, nausea or vomiting, dizziness and disorientation, muscle weakness or fatigue. If the flu-like symptoms are not accompanied by fever, or if everyone in the house is ill, or if the symptoms disappear when you leave the house, you may have a carbon monoxide problem.

www.jaxenergy.com/gassafety

If you disturb or expose a gas line, or damage the pipe coating of a gas line, call 731-422-7500.

If you damage a gas line and it creates a situation where life or property is threatened, or fumes or gas is escaping:

- Stop digging and leave the equipment in place
- Evacuate the area and remain upwind at a safe distance
- Call 911 and Jackson Energy Authority



Jackson Energy Authority
One thing you can count on.

731.422.7500 | www.jaxenergy.com

Jackson Energy Authority is an equal opportunity employer.

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