

# Protecting what matters most

## Natural gas safety tips for homes and businesses

Natural gas is one of the safest, most reliable and efficient forms of energy available today. And like any energy source, it's always best to use it with safety in mind.

At Spire, we're committed to your safety. So we want you to fully understand your responsibility in maintaining and safely using natural gas appliances. Because, in the end, nothing is more important than your safety and the safety of those you care about. So let's work to protect what matters most — *together*.

### Use your senses to spot a leak

#### Smell

While natural gas is colorless and odorless, we add the smell of rotten eggs (called mercaptan) so you can easily identify a potential leak.

#### Sight

Look for these signs, especially near pipelines:

- Dead or discolored vegetation
- Bubbling water
- Blowing dust

#### Sounds

Listen for an unexplained hissing, whistling or roaring sound

### Know what to do if you suspect a leak

- Immediately evacuate the area
- Move outside and upwind from the location of the suspected leak
- Avoid creating a spark, using or turning electronic devices on and off (such as a light switch or cell phone) when leaving
- Warn others
- Get to a safe location then immediately call **800-887-4173** or 911. Never assume someone else will call
- Take all of these steps prior to contacting a property management company
- Return only after you've been told the area is secure by Spire personnel

### Guard against carbon monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a normal by-product of burning fuel sources like gasoline, wood, propane and natural gas. If your appliances are not working properly or are improperly ventilated, there is potential for CO to reach dangerous levels in your home, which can be extremely dangerous and even fatal. To guard against CO exposure, always have a UL-approved CO detector with an alarm in your home, and schedule yearly furnace inspections. Learn more about the symptoms of CO exposure at [SpireEnergy.com/CO](https://www.spireenergy.com/CO)

### Safety tips for cozy homes

- Store the gas valve key in a safe place where only adults can access it
- Open the chimney flue before lighting gas logs, unless the logs are designed to be ventless
- Warm those chilly spaces with a natural gas space heater, but be sure to keep flammable materials far away (this includes curtains, couches and other materials)
- Let your dryer dry your clothes — not the space heater. Leaving clothes on a space heater is a hazard
- Don't use gas pipes for clotheslines, free-form closets or grounds for electrical appliances
- Have your space heaters and gas logs inspected annually by a qualified professional before turning them on each year, and follow the manufacturer's instructions for configuring gas logs
- Only a qualified professional should install space heaters and gas logs

### Safety tips for tasty meals

- Roll up your sleeves before you get cookin'. That way, loose clothing won't accidentally come in contact with an open flame
- Spray your pan with cooking spray ahead of time, and spray it away from your stove. Sprays and open flames can be a dangerous mix
- Make sure your stove is clear of flammable materials before creating your culinary masterpiece. Keep a special eye out for things like paper towels, kitchen towels, oven mitts or food packaging
- Use your stove or oven exclusively for cooking delicious meals. Never use it to heat a room or dry clothes. This is not only a fire hazard, but it also puts you at risk for CO exposure

### Safety tips for warm showers

- Check your local codes before installing water heaters or other appliances in a residential garage
- Don't use or store flammable liquids or explosive materials near your water heater because vapors can migrate
- Set your water heater below 120°F. Anything above this could cause severe burns

### Safety tips for proper ventilation

- Inspect your gas appliances periodically for signs of corrosion that could cause a perforation or joint separation. If you notice either condition, contact a qualified professional
- Keep an eye out for anything that could be blocking vents, and clear the blockage right away
- Inspect side-wall vents, meter and outdoor natural gas equipment more frequently in the winter months. These are especially prone to getting blocked by things like ice and snow
- Call a qualified professional to do an annual inspection
- Make sure your vents are clear of obstructions approximately 48 inches in all directions so your equipment can discharge exhaust. Also make sure vents are installed no less than 12 inches above the ground
- Contact a qualified professional for recommendations on how to maintain sufficient fresh air to gas appliances. Always follow the manufacturer specifications, and never cover any openings or alter the appliance in any way. This helps minimize the risk of CO exposure
- After removing a natural gas appliance, make sure to always cap any unused gas lines. Don't rely on closing the valve alone



# Natural gas safety in your home or business

Natural gas provides comfort and efficiency in any home or business — especially if used and installed according to your local building codes and manufacturer's instructions. That's also where you'll find warnings and warranties.

We always recommend having a qualified professional install and service anything in your home that uses natural gas. Also, never store flammable liquids or gasses near appliances. Vapors can migrate, so it's just good practice. Always follow these recommendations, and keep the below additional safety tips in mind when working with your natural gas appliances.

## Shared piping

We share ownership of the gas piping on your property. Spire owns all gas piping up to the meter, and you own and are responsible for maintaining gas piping that is beyond the meter, whether the piping is above ground or underground. Having those pipes inspected and repaired regularly is an important part of keeping yourself and those you love safe.

You can find a qualified professional to work on your natural gas piping online at [SpireEnergy.com/FindContractor](https://www.spireenergy.com/FindContractor). If damage is discovered, it is your responsibility to make the repairs right away.

## Inspecting your in-house natural gas piping

If your home or business has corrugated stainless steel tubing, we recommend having a qualified professional make sure it's properly grounded and bonded. Because if it's not, it could lead to a natural gas leak or even a fire.

If you have natural gas appliances installed prior to 1977, your appliance connections may be an uncoated brass flexible connector susceptible to cracking, breaking and deterioration and should be replaced by a qualified natural gas contractor.

To learn more about corrugated stainless steel tubing and uncoated brass flexible connectors, visit [SpireEnergy.com/GasApplianceSafety](https://www.spireenergy.com/GasApplianceSafety).

## Excess Flow Valve (EFV)

An EFV is a mechanical safety device designed to minimize the flow of gas in the event of a service line break. You can request installation of an Excess Flow Valve (EFV) on your existing gas service line. If you are interested, we will need to do an analysis to determine if one is possible and if there are any associated costs. To learn more, please visit [SpireEnergy.com/GasApplianceSafety](https://www.spireenergy.com/GasApplianceSafety).

## Plumbing projects

While rare, a crossbore can happen when sewage pipes and natural gas pipelines intersect. This situation does not pose an immediate safety risk unless the natural gas pipe is damaged when trying to clear a blockage in a sewer pipe. For more information on steps you can take to avoid damaging pipelines, visit [SpireEnergy.com](https://www.spireenergy.com) and search for 'Safety.'

## Pipeline safety

Natural gas pipelines are one of the safest, most reliable ways to transport natural gas and other energy products, according to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. Each natural gas company, including Spire, has a pipeline integrity management plan, and you're always welcome to contact us for more information about the details of that plan.

## Pipeline markers









Since pipelines are buried underground, pipeline markers help us identify where they are. These can typically be found where a pipeline intersects a street, highway or railway. Be aware of any pipeline markers in your neighborhood. While markers are helpful, they do not let you know the depth of the pipeline, the number of pipelines or the exact location of the pipelines.

## Call 811 before you dig

Excavations are the leading cause of underground pipeline damage. The law requires that you call 811 at least three working days before you dig to have underground utility lines marked — whether your project is as big as laying a foundation or as small as planting a bush.

When you call 811, a utility locate company will mark the location of your underground utilities with color-coded flags or paint. This color-coding system is used by the American Public Works Association (APWA) to help you easily identify what's underground — before you start digging.

## APWA color codes:

-  White: Proposed excavation
-  Fluorescent Pink: Temporary survey markings
-  Red: Electric power lines, cables, conduit and lighting cables
-  Yellow: Gas, oil, steam, petroleum or gaseous materials
-  Orange: Communication, alarm or signal lines, cables or conduit
-  Blue: Potable water
-  Purple: Reclaimed water, irrigation and slurry lines
-  Green: Sewers and drain lines

Occasionally, a leak or damage to underground facilities occurs. Damage to a pipeline can result in severe injury or death as a result of an ignition, explosion or asphyxiation.

## Let us know right away if an accident happens

Accidents can and do happen. So if you accidentally hit a pipeline, call us right away — even if the damage appears minor. A gouge, scrape, dent or crease in the pipe or coating may cause a future rupture or leak. So it's important to always call us right away. Do not attempt to make repairs to the pipeline yourself.

## Help us keep our pipelines safe

The nation's infrastructure, including pipelines, are a matter of national security. If you witness suspicious activity on a pipeline right of way, or near above ground facilities, please report it to the appropriate authorities as soon as possible, or give us a call at 800-887-4173. Threat advisories may be found on the Department of Homeland Security's website at [www.dhs.gov](https://www.dhs.gov).

## Reach out with questions

If you have any questions at all about natural gas safety in your home or community, give us a call at 800-887-4173.

## Other helpful resources

[Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration – Office of Pipeline Safety | www.phmsa.dot.gov](https://www.phmsa.dot.gov)

[Common Ground Alliance www.commongroundalliance.com](https://www.commongroundalliance.com)

[American Gas Association www.aga.org](https://www.aga.org)

