

OHIO GAS COMPANY-- A GUIDE TO SAFE PRACTICES
“IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION YOU SHOULD KNOW”

Gas Odor Awareness - It's important that you and your family recognize this odor, whether or not you have natural gas service. **If you would like to receive a scratch and sniff card to familiarize yourself with the odor, please contact us at: 1-800-331-7396.**

That distinctive odor is the harmless chemical Ohio Gas Company and other natural gas utilities add so you can detect even the smallest amount of escaping gas. It smells bad, but that is good because natural gas has no odor of its own. Everyone should be able to recognize our built-in safety signal. Used properly, natural gas is a safe, reliable, and efficient fuel. However, leaking gas can signal potential danger.

If you detect a strong odor: (1) leave the building immediately, (2) do not use your telephone, turn on a light switch, light a match, or do anything that might create a flame or spark, (3) go to a neighbor's telephone and call our 24-hour emergency number 1-800-331-7396 or 419-636-3642 for assistance.

If you ever detect faint whiffs of this odor investigate by “following your nose” to the source. It may be only a pilot light that is out, or a burner valve left on, something easily and safely corrected. Open a window or door to get fresh air to the affected area. If the source of gas cannot be located or if the odor persists, call our 24-hour emergency number 1-800-331-7396 or 419-636-3642 for assistance.

If you plan to Dig, now dial 811 for OHIO811 (Ohio Utilities Protection Service) or 1-800-362-2764. Ohio Gas Company along with other OHIO811 member utilities, will come out, locate and mark buried facilities, **at no charge**. A 2 working day notice but no more than 10 days before digging is required by law whether you're doing major excavation or a minor construction job such as planting a tree or installing a mail box post. A damaged pipeline can result in a serious safety hazard, endangering lives and property. If you don't call and our facilities are damaged, you are liable for damages and injuries. So please call and protect yourself and others. For more information about Digging Safely, visit www.ohio811.org or <http://www.oups.org>.

Safety appliance stops are valves that turn on and off gas to a gas appliance, just like a switch turns on and off electricity. The National Fire Protection Association publication NFPA 54 - National Fuel Gas Code - subpart 5.5.4 mandates that on new installations and when the gas supply is turned on, an appliance stop must be installed. Installation of appliance stops are required for: safety and convenience, emergency shutoff of an appliance, scheduled repair, leak testing of a fuel line and equipment replacement. If during our required testing procedures, your gas appliance must be disconnected, Ohio Gas Company has available for purchase, through our service technicians, an appliance stop at a nominal cost. Because the installation of a stop is considered a labor-saving device, Ohio Gas Company will charge no labor cost for the installation. You are under no obligation to purchase the appliance stop from Ohio Gas Company. You may choose to have your plumbing contractor make the required installation.

Customers are responsible for maintaining gas lines after the meter. Ohio Gas Company owns all natural gas piping, from the gas distribution main (located along the street or utility right-of-way) through the service line to the outlet of the gas meter set. We operate and maintain our gas lines in accordance with the State and Federal Gas Pipeline Safety Regulations. Customer-owned piping is any piping located between the meter and your natural gas appliances. This piping is part of the building or property, much like your plumbing or electrical wiring, and as such, it requires periodic maintenance.

Do you own a buried gas line? If the only buried natural gas line is upstream of (before) your gas meter, the answer is “no” and you may stop reading this portion of the safety notice. If you have any buried natural gas lines downstream of (after) your gas meter, the answer is “yes” and you should review the remainder of this portion of the safety notice for important safety information. If you do have buried customer-owned piping, it is important to note that you, the customer, are responsible for the maintenance of all gas piping from the gas meter to all gas appliances. Failure to maintain your underground gas piping may lead to the potential hazards of corrosion (rusting) and leakage. If a leak, severe corrosion, or any unsafe condition is discovered, the line should be repaired. To learn more about natural gas safety, visit <http://www.safegasohio.org>. For your safety, all buried piping should be periodically inspected for leaks. If the buried piping is metallic, it should also be inspected for corrosion. If an unsafe condition is found, the gas piping will need to be promptly repaired. When digging near buried gas piping, the piping should be located in advance and digging done by hand. Plumbers and heating contractors can assist in locating, inspecting, and repairing customers buried piping.

Your safety as well as your family’s safety is why Ohio Gas Company is addressing gas appliance installations in residential garages. Improperly installed gas appliances in residential garages have been identified as being a possible ignition source if flammable liquids are accidentally spilled or improperly stored inside the garage. Studies have shown that properly installed gas appliances in residential garages helps reduce the risk of ignition dramatically. Effective July 1, 2003. All gas utilization equipment located in residential garages must comply with the National Fuel Gas Code NFPA 54, subpart 8.1.10 or they will be subject to being shut off and red tagged by Ohio Gas Company, unless the gas appliance is designed with new Flammable Vapor Ignition Resistant Technology, established by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI Z21.101) implemented to begin July 1, 2003. NFPA 54, subpart 8.1.10 - Installation in Residential Garages, states: (a) Gas utilization equipment in residential garages shall be installed so that all burners and burner ignition devices are located not less than 18” (450 mm) above the floor, (b) such equipment shall be located or protected so it is not subject to physical damage by a moving vehicle, (c) when appliances are installed in a separate, enclosed space having access only from outside of the garage, such equipment may be installed at floor level, provided the required combustion air is taken from the exterior of the garage.

Accidental ignition of flammable vapors typically happens when consumers are carelessly working near gas appliances with a flammable liquid-such as fueling a lawn mower or using gasoline for cleaning purposes. The invisible vapors from the open container (or from a pool of the spilled liquid) can spread across the floor and contact the burner or pilot light, causing a flashback fire or explosion. Flammable products should be kept far away from gas burning equipment in approved tightly closed containers, out of reach of children. Water heaters that are elevated 18” above the floor will reduce, but not eliminate, the risk of vapors being ignited by the pilot or burner flame.

Water temperature at 150°F can cause severe burns to children, elderly and disabled persons in just a couple of seconds. Any thermostat setting of the water heater which is above the mark that approximates 120°F, may cause accidental scalding, accidental burns, or other injuries. Lowering temperature settings on your water heater will prevent this type of serious injury. To check the temperature of your hot water, insert a cooking thermometer in the flow of hot water at a faucet for 3-5 minutes or until the water temperature stops rising. Read the thermometer, if the temperature is above 120° you should adjust your thermostat to a lower setting. Always read your water heater instruction manual before adjusting your water heater thermostat.

During the winter months, snow and ice can cover your gas meter making it difficult for our employees to read. In addition, **heavy buildup of snow and ice can affect your meters operation** and make it difficult for us to service your meter in an emergency. You can make a difference by keeping your meters area clear by brushing off snow and sweeping away other debris from your meter and by showing snow removal contractors the location of your meter so they don't damage it with their power equipment. Be careful not to use a shovel or any other sharp instrument that could damage the meter.

Direct-venting or side wall vent chimney and flue systems are a method of venting the exhaust gases from a heating appliance directly out through the side wall of a building while eliminating the need for a vertical chimney of any sort. Blocking the combustion air intake or exhaust outlet by accumulated snow, ice, or even shrubs or piled leaves can result in dangerous, potentially fatal carbon monoxide gas poisoning of the building occupants. You should inspect the exhaust vent and combustion air intake vent for blockage at least annually, and we recommend further inspection in winter for blockage by snow or ice.

Some older corrugated metal tubes used to connect home appliances to natural gas supply pipes can corrode leading to a fire or explosion. These connectors are used most often with gas ranges, ovens and clothes dryers. The connectors are older uncoated brass connectors, which have not been made for at least the past 10 years. The brass fittings on these connectors which attach the connector to the natural gas supply pipe and the appliance were soldered onto a corrugated brass tube. Consumers should not move their appliances in an effort to inspect the connectors. There is a possibility that the solder can fail, causing a break in the connector and resulting in a gas leak. Ask a plumber or contractor to inspect and replace uncoated brass appliance connectors with new flexible appliance connectors. Moving an appliance, even slightly, if only to clean behind it, could cause a weakened connector to fail.

National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM) has launched a nationwide safety campaign to bring awareness to property owners on the importance of **proper bonding and grounding of corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST)** due to potential damage risks associated with lightning. CSST is flexible metal gas tubing and often has a yellow, or sometimes a black plastic coating. It has been installed in over 6 million structures in the U.S. since the early 1990s and is used to supply natural gas or propane to furnaces, water heaters, and other gas appliances. Direct or indirect lightning strikes on or near a structure have been shown to cause an electrical surge to travel into the structure and have in some cases caused a perforation in the sidewall of the tubing as the energy arcs from one metallic system to another seeking ground. This arcing can ignite the pressurized gas leaking from the perforation, and in some cases, has caused a significant fire. Information can be found at this website <http://www.csstsafety.com/index.html>. Even though CSST has been approved and available for use since the 1990s, older structures that have had new gas appliances installed or gas fuel lines relocated may also contain this material. Property owners who have CSST installed in their buildings are encouraged to determine if the system is properly bonded and grounded. Licensed electrical contractors or licensed HVAC contractors should be contacted to make the correct determination on proper bonding and grounding of the system.

More and more utility companies are installing underground utility lines **using trenchless technology to bury electric, water, gas and telecommunication lines**. This technology is also known as directional boring. However, Directional Boring Technology can create some potential dangerous situations if not performed following industry Best Practice procedures. Cross boring into a sewer line may occur and go undetected causing the sewer to back up over time. Cross boring occurs when the utility line is inadvertently installed through the sewer line. Typically, a backed-up sewer is cleaned out by a plumber. It is recommended that before starting the process of cleaning out a sewer line, the plumber should place a short notice call to OHIO811 by dialing 811 or 1-800-362-2764 to get buried utility lines marked. Once the utility lines have been marked, determine if there are any points where they may have crossed the sewer line. If it is determined that an underground utility line has crossed the path of the sewer line, it is a safe practice to hand dig at that point to see if the utility damaged your sewer. If damage is discovered, **STOP** all work and contact the utility company. **If you suspect a natural gas leak, leave the area and instruct others to leave the area too. Eliminate ignition sources and call 911.**