

IMPORTANT contacts

EMERGENCIES 911

LEAKS 24 hour (650) 329-2579

BEFORE DIGGING

811 (landline) or (800) 227-2600

Underground Service Alert (USA)

GENERAL QUESTIONS AND INFORMATION ABOUT PIPELINE SAFETY

CALL CITY OF PALO ALTO WATER-GAS-WASTEWATER OPERATIONS AT:

(650) 496-6982 or

(650) 496-6907

E-MAIL:
cpau@cityofpaloalto.org

VISIT:
www.cityofpaloalto.org/utilities
www.usanorth.org

Individuals with disabilities who require accommodations to access City facilities, services or programs, or who would like information on the City's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, may contact the City's ADA Coordinator at (650) 329-2550 (voice) or e-mail ada@cityofpaloalto.org

Printed on recycled paper

5/09

WHAT IS A GAS emergency

A leaking pipeline

A weakened or damaged gas pipeline

Fire or explosion near or directly involving a pipeline

Natural disaster affecting a pipeline such as earthquake, flood or soil erosion



**CALL 911
IN AN
EMERGENCY**

STAY safe

The City of Palo Alto is committed to protecting you and the environment. The City owns and operates an underground natural gas distribution system comprised of approximately 207 miles of distribution piping, 17,000 customer gas service lines and 23,400 gas meters. These underground gas pipes are located throughout Palo Alto and in some cases cross into other communities.

Although it is rare that a major natural gas leak will go undetected for long, we want to provide reliable delivery of gas and help you stay safe around natural gas pipelines in your community.

THIS BROCHURE WILL HELP YOU:

Recognize and report gas leaks

Call before you dig

Know what to do in a gas emergency

know

Know What to do if There is a Gas Leak or Pipeline Emergency

If you hit a pipe while digging or you smell gas or detect a leak anywhere, leave the area immediately; call 911 or the City of Palo Alto 24 hour emergency number at (650) 329-2579 for assistance. Even minor damage—such as a gouge, scrape, dent or crease in the pipe or coating—can cause a leak.

If you detect even a small amount of the odor of natural gas in the air and don't know where it is coming from, don't stay—get away. Go to a neighbor's home or business and call for emergency assistance.



GAS PIPELINE safety awareness

IDENTIFYING gas leaks

How to Identify A Gas Pipeline

City of Palo Alto natural gas pipelines are buried underground throughout the community. Look for above-ground pipeline markers at street crossings, highways, railroads and fences. Emergency phone numbers are posted on the markers and should be used if a gas leak is detected or emergency situation occurs.

Natural Gas Has A Distinctive Odor

Mercaptan, a chemical that is added to natural gas to make it smell, contains sulfur. Many people describe the odor of mercaptan as similar to rotten eggs. When mercaptan is added to natural gas, it rises and dissipates much like the gas itself, making the two substances ideal companions. Your nose knows—the smell of mercaptan is unmistakable and helps you detect even the smallest amount of natural gas leaking into the air. In its native state, natural gas is odorless, colorless and tasteless.

How to Recognize A Pipeline Leak

Here are the signs of a possible leak around the pipeline area.

SIGHT

Fire or explosion near pipeline

A fog or white cloud

Unusual dirt or dust blowing

Pool of liquid on the ground, possibly bubbling

Persistent bubbles in standing water

Discolored vegetation

SOUND

Hissing or roaring sound

SMELL

Unpleasant rotten egg or gas odor

YOUR responsibility

Pipeline from Your Meter If you are the property owner, you are responsible for safely maintaining gas lines from the gas meter to your home, yard, pool, hot tub, granny unit, appliances, cottage, workshop or any other location on your property. It is the owner's responsibility to maintain the piping; if not maintained, it may be subject to corrosion (if the piping is metallic) and/or leakage.

Inspection and Maintenance To ensure safe, reliable operation, buried piping should be inspected periodically for corrosion and leaks. You (or the building owner) are advised to contact a licensed plumber or heating contractor to locate and inspect your buried gas piping. If an unsafe condition is discovered, repairs should be made as soon as possible.

Gas Meter Access Please do not store objects above gas meters; they may fall and damage the meters. Also, do not block the meter by planting trees, shrubs or other plants near it.



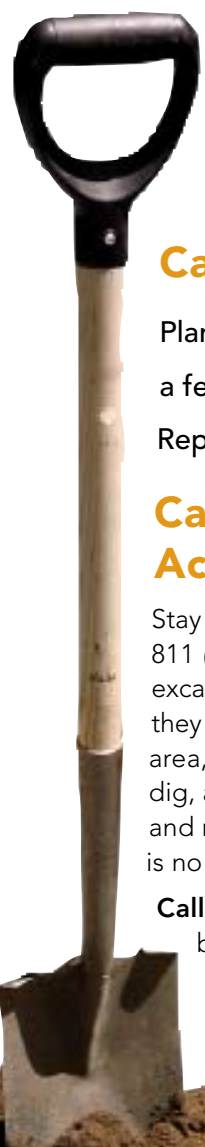
OUR responsibility

Pipeline from City Main to Building Meter The City of Palo Alto owns, and is responsible for, the gas line on your property that goes from the City main to your home gas meter. We maintain the natural gas distribution system in accordance with prescribed federal safety standards.

All Utility Meters and Valves Are City Property If you need to shut off natural gas at the City meter for any reason, DO NOT do it yourself. Only authorized utility workers are permitted to turn off City meters and valves on your property. Avoid getting hurt or running into problems by calling the City of Palo Alto at (650) 329-2579, 24 hours a day. A separate shutoff valve on your side of the City meter can be installed by a licensed plumber if you want to be able to turn off the gas by yourself.

Gas Meter Protection The City of Palo Alto strives to improve the safety of our gas system by revising our specifications to the latest industry standards. Occasionally, these revised specifications require that gas meters are relocated or protective barriers are installed to prevent damage from vehicular traffic.





call BEFORE YOU DIG

Call Before You Dig to Ensure It Is Safe to:

- Plant a tree • Stake a sapling tree • Dig a trench • Build or repair a fence or deck • Pour a building foundation • Dig up sprinklers • Replace a driveway or walkway • Remove a parking median

Call Before You Dig—Avoid Costly Accidents and Dangerous Conditions

Stay safe and avoid accidents by calling Underground Service Alert (USA) at 811 (landline only) or (800) 227-2600, a minimum of **48 hours** prior to any excavation. Many pipelines don't follow a straight path and the depth at which they are buried can vary. By calling USA first, properly marking your excavation area, and providing a detailed description of where and when you plan to dig, all underground natural gas pipelines and other utilities will be located and marked prior to your excavation work. USA is a free service and there is no charge for calling. Visit <http://www.usanorth.org> for more information.

Call Before you Dig. It is your responsibility to call USA before digging begins. Failure to call this number can potentially result in liability for any damage or loss of property.

Wait for the Site to be Marked before Digging. You will be required to mark the location of your proposed excavation area to assist the City in determining potential conflicts with underground utilities.

Excavate by Hand (within two feet horizontally)

When excavating near buried gas pipelines, locate piping in advance and dig by hand to avoid damaging gas lines.

Dig with Care. In the event that a natural gas pipeline is disturbed, move away from the escaping gas and immediately call 911 or notify the City of Palo Alto at (650) 329-2579. The City will dispatch crews to fix the leak and make the area safe.

Call Underground Service Alert (USA) at (800) 227-2600

in a gas emergency, PLEASE FOLLOW THESE RULES OR YOU WILL PUT PEOPLE AT RISK

Do not stay in your home to make calls. Leave immediately and make your calls from elsewhere.

Do not use or touch anything electrical—phone, cell phone, light switch—leave the area immediately.

Do not turn on or off any lights, appliances or equipment.

Do not strike a match. Do not look for a gas leak.

AT home

Operate Gas Appliances Safely

It is important to keep your gas appliances (furnace, boiler, water heater, clothes dryer, barbeque grill, stove and oven) well-tuned and operating properly.

If pilot lights and burners have a steady, blue flame, they are operating correctly. (Decorative gas fire logs are the only exception; their flame could be either blue or yellow.)

Have all gas appliances, furnaces, vents, flues, chimneys and gas lines in your home or business inspected every year or two by qualified industry professionals.

Keep the areas around all appliances and equipment clean and unblocked to allow for proper air flow.

Store flammable materials (paper, mops, brooms, laundry, etc.) far away from gas appliances to avoid fires.

Store combustible materials (lighter fluid, gasoline, solvents, oil-based paints, etc.) far away from gas appliances to avoid explosions.

Follow manufacturer instructions for the care and use of gas appliances and equipment.

Make sure there is at least one multipurpose fire extinguisher in your home or place of business.

ALERT: Carbon Monoxide is Odorless yet Harmful

Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that is produced during the improper combustion of fuels such as gasoline, coal, wood, charcoal, kerosene, propane, heating oil and natural gas. If your furnace is operating properly, the gas flame will appear blue. If your gas flame turns yellow, your furnace may be producing carbon monoxide. When breathed into the body, carbon monoxide combines with the blood and prevents it from absorbing oxygen. This can result in illness and even death. Install a detector to warn you of a problem.

Because it is colorless, odorless, tasteless and non-irritating, carbon monoxide is difficult to detect. Signs that you have been exposed to carbon monoxide include headache, nausea, fatigue, blurry vision and flu-like symptoms that disappear or lessen when you leave the building. The severity of the symptoms depends on the amount of exposure. Other

signs that carbon monoxide is present inside a building include:

- Unusually high indoor humidity
- Persistent heavy condensation on walls and windows
- Stuffy or stale indoor air
- Soot or water collecting near a burner or vent
- A carbon monoxide detector with alarm

If you suspect carbon monoxide in your home, immediately open the windows to ventilate the area and leave the room. If you are experiencing physical symptoms, get everyone out of the house and call a doctor. Call 911 or contact the City of Palo Alto at (650) 329-2579 to find the source of the carbon monoxide and do not return until the condition is corrected.

BEING responsible

If your Residence or Business is Near a Pipeline

Natural gas pipelines operated by the local utility are buried underground and their approximate location is usually indicated by markers along the route where the pipe intersects a street, highway or railway. The markers will indicate whom to call if you smell a leak or detect escaping gas by hearing a hissing or roaring sound. If you detect a leak, leave the area, then call 911 or the pipeline operator listed on the marker.

If you are a Public Official or First Responder to Emergencies

Public safety officials can help with pipeline emergencies. In the event of an emergency on a Palo Alto gas pipeline located near your community, call 911 or the City of Palo Alto emergency dispatchers at (650) 329-2579. The following are other guidelines to keep in mind:

If a leak is detected, secure the area around the leak with barricades and control access to the area.

Assess whether to evacuate the area. If so, this may include the need to evacuate homes, businesses, schools and other facilities.

Determine whether the leak is burning. If so, try to prevent the spread of fire, but do not attempt to extinguish it, as there is a chance of secondary flames and unexpected re-ignition.

If the leak is not burning, prevent ignition by prohibiting smoking and directing traffic away from the area.

Contact Palo Alto immediately so the City can send utility and emergency crews to the site to shut off the gas and begin the necessary repairs.

If you are an Excavator—Special Instructions for Your Workers

For contractors, excavators, landscapers and other construction crews, unintended dig-ins are the leading cause of serious and costly pipeline accidents. Call USA at 811 (landlines only) at least 48 hours before you dig, properly mark your excavation area in the field, and wait for your work site to be marked before excavating. Once the underground utilities are marked, dig with care. If you hit a pipeline, even if you do not see visible damage, call 911 immediately to have the pipe inspected prior to proceeding. Even a minor gouge, dent, scrape or crease can lead to a serious hazard.

