

# NATURAL GAS SAFETY IN YOUR HOME



A Division of Montana-Dakota Utilities Co.

*In the Community to Serve®*

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**GREAT PLAINS NATURAL GAS IS COMMITTED TO** providing safe and reliable natural gas service to our customers. Natural gas is a clean, efficient, and safe fuel that adds comfort and ease to your life. It heats your home, warm your showers, cooks your food, dries your clothes and more. Natural gas is safe when used with proper care; as with any fuel source, it is important to follow proper safety precautions to keep your home safe.



## NATURAL GAS LEAKS

Natural gas is a colorless, odorless, non-toxic substance. For easy detection, an odorant is added to help identify a potential natural gas leak. The odor gives off a smell similar to rotten eggs or sulfur. If there is a natural gas smell in your home:

- Leave the building immediately.
- If you are outside, leave the area immediately.
- From a safe place, call 877-267-4764.
- Stay away until given the “all clear” from a Great Plains employee or emergency official.

## LEAVE THE HOME IMMEDIATELY & REMEMBER:

- Do not turn on any lights, electrical switches or unplug appliances in the home.
- Do not smoke, use lighters or matches. Extinguish open flames.
- Turn off electric, battery-powered or rechargeable devices including phones, radios, TVs, computers, garage door openers—any device that could spark.
- Do not use any telephones in the home, including cell, cordless or landline phones.

## CARBON MONOXIDE

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless, and tasteless gas that is produced when any fossil fuel (including natural gas) is burned. When fossil fuels do not burn properly, CO can build up and cause sickness and even death. CO can build up when gas appliances are used improperly or are not vented properly. The warning signs of CO poisoning include:

- Dizziness, nausea, headache and coughing.
- Irregular heartbeat.
- Unconsciousness.

If CO poisoning is suspected, get fresh air immediately. Stay outside and call 911 for emergency assistance.

## PREVENT CO POISONING BY:

- Never using a gas range or oven to heat a home or apartment.
- Having gas appliances and heating systems inspected annually by a qualified contractor.
- Installing CO detectors in a home. Follow the manufacturer’s installation and use guidelines.

## NATURAL GAS APPLIANCE AND HEATING SAFETY

On natural gas appliances and heating systems, the color of the flame is a good indicator of the degree of combustion. The flame should always burn blue, not orange or yellow. If the flame is not blue, it may be a sign that the equipment needs adjusting or cleaning. Appliances and heating systems should be checked and adjusted by a qualified service technician.

- **Water Heaters:** Make sure the hot water heater is set to no higher than 120°F to prevent accidental burns.
- **Furnaces:** Have a qualified service technician check the heating system annually. Technicians check for proper combustion, carbon monoxide levels, flue gas temperature, burners, and the heat exchanger for proper operation.
- **Keep Flammables Away From Appliances:** Never use or store flammable products such as gasoline, solvents or adhesives near a water heater or any other natural gas or electric appliance because vapors from flammable liquids can ignite.

## NATURAL GAS METERS

Natural gas meters are designed to withstand extreme weather conditions, but they should be protected from ice and snow buildup during the harsh winter months. Accumulated snow places stress on the meter piping. Damage to the piping can cause a gas leak. To avoid undue stress on your gas meter:

- Try to keep gas meters free of heavy accumulations of snow or ice.
- Do not strike meters with snow blowers, blades or shovels.
- Do not kick the gas meter to break or clear ice.
- Remove icicles from overhead eaves and gutters to ensure dripping water does not splash and freeze on the meter or vent pipes.



Scan the QR code with your mobile device to visit our website.



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

The greatest risk to underground natural gas pipelines is accidental damage during excavation. Even minor damage such as a dent, scrape, crease or gouge to a pipeline coating may cause a leak or failure. If you or a contractor will be digging on your property, remember to call 811 before you dig. One free and easy call gets all of your utility lines marked and helps protect you from injury and expense. Remember to dig safely by:

- ▶ Calling 811 before digging.
- ▶ Waiting for the site to be marked.
- ▶ Respecting the marks.
- ▶ Digging with care.

For additional information on pipelines in your area, visit the following state agencies:

**MINNESOTA** [www.mn.gov/puc](http://www.mn.gov/puc)  
**NORTH DAKOTA** [www.psc.nd.gov](http://www.psc.nd.gov)

Or visit the National Pipeline Mapping System at [www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov](http://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov).

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