

An Important Message About Damage Prevention Prior to Excavating

This message is brought to you by **Barrow Utilities & Electric Cooperative, Inc.** There are thousands of dig-in damage incidents in the United States every year. Striking an underground pipeline may lead to expensive fines, serious injury or death. Gas pipelines are built with safety and reliability as top priorities. Over the past 20 years, risk exposure has been rising through increased populations, energy consumption and pipeline miles. At the same time, the number of serious pipeline incidents involving death or injury has declined by 50%. Natural gas leaks do happen and may result in fire, explosion, and/or asphyxiation. Natural gas is a colorless, odorless gas; however, a chemical that smells like rotten eggs is added to help detect a possible leak. It's a bad smell. That's good!

Some of the signs of a gas leak include seeing bubbling water, hearing a hissing or blowing sound from a pipeline or appliance, dead or discolored vegetation in an otherwise green area, or dirt or dust blowing from the ground, or the smell of rotten eggs.

If you smell gas, or just think you might have a gas leak:

- **Leave** the area immediately; **Do Not** congregate around natural gas facilities.
 - **Call 907-852-6166 or 911** from a neighboring home or business
 - **Never** turn on or off switches, open or close garage doors, use a flashlight or phone/cellphone in the presence of the gas smell, as these devices may be a source of ignition, causing an explosion.
 - **Stay** in a safe location until the Emergency Responder arrives and gives you clearance to return to the area.
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Here are five easy steps to damage prevention:

1. **Survey and Mark** – Survey the proposed excavation area and mark the dig sites in white paint.
 2. **Call Before You Dig** - 48 hours prior to digging, call 811 and get free staking of underground utility lines which helps reduce the chance of injury and unneeded expense. It is the law in Alaska.
 3. **Wait!** Wait the required time to allow utility owners to locate and mark the lines.
 4. **Respect the Marks!** Maintain visibility of the marks and safely follow them when digging.
 5. **Dig** – Dig with care. Hand excavate within 24-inches of each side of the locate marks. If you plan to dig anywhere near a marked area – especially when using mechanized equipment – use a shovel and carefully hand dig to expose the lines.
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If your equipment contacts a gas line:

- **Leave** the equipment; jumping clear and shuffling away – **DO NOT** turn off the engine.
 - **Warn other and leave** the area quickly.
 - **Do Not operate** any gas pipeline valves or stop the flow of gas or try to fold over plastic pipelines.
 - Leave the **excavation open.**
 - If gas is escaping the pipeline, **call 911**, then **BUECI at 907-852-6166** If the line is nicked, scraped, gouged, dented or otherwise damaged but not leaking, call **907-852-6166**; these may appear to be minor but can lead to future leaks if not properly repaired.
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Natural gas is America's most popular home heating fuel and is increasingly popular for use by homeowners, schools, businesses, factories and electric power-generation plants. Natural gas is efficient, clean, reliable, and a relative bargain compared to alternative energy sources. Natural gas flows through a network of underground main lines that serve approximately **768** customers in our system. These main lines are typically 4-inch in diameter and branch into household service lines which are typically half-inch to three-quarter-inch in diameter and buried 12- to 18-inches below the surface. The service lines end at each customer's meter where gas is delivered.

This message is brought to you by *Barrow Utilities & Electric Cooperative, Inc.* as a part of our Public Awareness Program. For additional information regarding this message, call 907-852-6166.