

Virginia Natural Gas operates, secures and maintains the pipeline in our service territory. With safety being our highest priority, we adhere to federal, state and local pipeline safety regulations by performing extensive quality control checks. We also conduct visual inspections, routine maintenance and leak surveys of our pipeline system, up to and including the meter located on your property.

As our partner in safety, we ask that if you see someone surveying or working with the gas meter on your property that you ask for identification. All Virginia Natural Gas employees and contractors will be happy to show you their ID. If you are not satisfied that they are one of our employees or a contractor performing work on our behalf, please call our Customer Care Center at **866.229.3578**.



I'm Sniffy!

Kids can visit me online
to learn more about
natural gas safety!

virginianaturalgas.com/sniffy

Natural gas meter safety

Virginia Natural Gas owns and is responsible for maintaining the gas lines and meter that deliver natural gas to your home or business. We must have full access to our equipment, including for routine maintenance and safety inspections. Please do not sit, stand or place items on the meter nor chain anything to it. Also, keep the meter clear of obstructions that can pose a potential danger to our employees, damage it or prevent us from reading it.

You are responsible for maintaining the natural gas-burning appliances within your home or business and on your property, as well as the gas lines that run from the meter to those gas-burning appliances – indoors and outdoors, above and below ground. Don't forget that you may have gas lines extending to yard lights, grills, pool heaters and garage or workshop heaters.

Should we need to enter your home or business for a service visit or enter your property to access our gas lines and/or meter, please stow your pets for their and our employees' safety.

- **Meter/regulator relocation** – If the natural gas meter on your property needs to be moved, call Virginia Natural Gas to have a qualified service representative perform the work. Moving or tampering with a meter or regulator can cause a potentially hazardous natural gas leak.

Stay alert and stay safe

Natural gas is a safe and reliable energy source. While leaks are uncommon, caution should be exercised in the event of a suspected natural gas leak. Natural gas is colorless and odorless, so we add a chemical odorant called mercaptan for easy detection. This odorant has a distinctive, "rotten egg" type odor. You should act any time you detect even a small amount of this odor in the air. If you suspect a natural gas leak, do the following:

- Do not try to identify the source or to stop the leak yourself.
- Leave the building immediately if you smell natural gas indoors.
- Avoid using any sources of ignition, such as cellphones, cigarettes, matches, natural gas appliances, flashlights, electronic devices, motorized vehicles or turn an electrical switch on or off, as natural gas can ignite near a spark or open flame, possibly causing a fire or explosion. Natural gas is non-toxic, lighter than air and displaces oxygen. In severe cases, if not used properly, it can also lead to asphyxiation.
- Call Virginia Natural Gas at **1.877.572.3342** or dial **911** once you are away from the area of the odor.

- **Snow and ice** – Be mindful that snow or ice covering the outside venting of a furnace, water heater or clothes dryer, or around a natural gas meter, can cause hazardous buildup of carbon monoxide. Use your hands or a broom, not mechanized equipment or a shovel, to clear snow from the meter and vents.

Natural gas appliance and equipment safety

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency:

- It's important that you have your furnace inspected by a qualified specialist according to manufacturer guidelines to ensure that it is in good working condition. Do not attempt repairs yourself unless you are qualified.
- Be sure all furnace controls and emergency shutoffs are in proper working condition.
- Keep trash and other combustible material away from your heating and water heating systems
- Keep natural gas vents unobstructed and free of debris. Some direct-vent and high-efficiency appliances have direct side wall outdoor vents and air intakes that could become obstructed during heavy snowfalls.

Never try to find a leak yourself



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

► Avoiding carbon monoxide

Natural gas is a safe fuel source; however, incomplete combustion of any fuel – charcoal, gasoline, wood or even natural gas – produces carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide is poisonous and has no odor, taste or color. Carbon monoxide detectors are helpful, but they are no substitute for using equipment safely. This includes having your appliances inspected at least once a year by a certified contractor. For a referral to one in your area, visit our website or call **866.229.3578** and choose option four.

► Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing (CSST)

CSST is a flexible, stainless steel pipe used to supply natural gas and propane to appliances and equipment in homes and businesses. Coated with a yellow or black exterior plastic coating, CSST is usually mounted alongside floor joists, inside wall cavities or on top of ceiling joists and attic spaces.

Recent updates to safety guidelines concerning the installation of CSST specify that proper bonding and grounding of this kind of pipe significantly reduces the risk of damage and fire from a lightning strike as well as the chances of possible electric shock by someone who comes in contact with it.

While Virginia Natural Gas does not use CSST in our work and maintenance, it is a possibility that CSST was used when your equipment or appliances were installed at your premises. If you suspect you may have CSST, have a certified contractor or plumber perform an evaluation. If it is found that you do have CSST, a bonding device may need to be installed by a professional in order to reduce the chances of possible injury.

► Safety regarding sewer lines

It is important that you be aware of a remote, yet potentially hazardous condition that could exist within your sewer line.

Directional boring and cross bores

Utilities install underground lines using trenchless technology known as horizontal directional drilling (or directional boring) to pull cable, conduit and pipe underground. This installation method causes minimal impact to the surrounding area and minimizes environmental disruption. There are instances when an underground sewer line is not properly identified prior to directional boring activities and it's possible that a natural gas pipe can be inadvertently "pulled" through a sewer line. **The resulting condition is known as a "cross bore." If a natural gas pipe has been bored through the sewer line, the gas pipeline could be damaged, resulting in a loss of service and a potentially hazardous leak condition. If you are aware of the existence of a cross bore, call Virginia Natural Gas at 1.877.572.3342 and report it as a natural gas emergency.**

Removing sewer blockages safely

If your sewer line backs up, we recommend hiring a professional drain cleaning ("roooter") company or sewer contractor. You are required to call **811** before doing any digging to repair the blockage. Even if you will not be digging, the safest method of clearing the blockage, if it is out in the yard, is to first have all underground facilities on your property located by calling **811**. If it is determined that underground natural gas pipes intersect with your sewer line, the drain cleaning company should use a camera to visually inspect the blocked line to ensure no gas pipes, cables, or conduit exist within the sewer line.

While it is common practice to use a mechanical rotary device to cut out the blockage, doing so without locating utility facilities or without a visual camera inspection of the sewer line could be dangerous. **If a natural gas pipe has been bored through the sewer line, the gas pipeline could be damaged, resulting in a loss of service and a potentially hazardous leak condition.**

► If a natural gas pipe is found in your sewer line:

- **Stop** all work immediately.
- **Call** Virginia Natural Gas at **1.877.572.3342**.
- **Report** it as a natural gas emergency.
- **Be sure** to let the customer service representative know that you have discovered a cross bore. We will take the appropriate steps to remove the natural gas line and make the area safe.

Information about transmission pipelines operating in your community is available through the **National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS)** and is online at www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov.

Para solicitar una copia de esta información en español, llame **866.229.3578**.
For more natural gas safety information visit: virginianaturalgas.com/safety