

# A MESSAGE ABOUT NATURAL GAS SAFETY

## How can I recognize a Natural Gas leak?



### SOUND

An unusual hissing, roaring, or whistling sound along a natural gas line or coming from an appliance might signify a leak.



### SMELL

Gas providers add a chemical that makes natural gas smell like rotten eggs so any leaks can be easily detected.



### SIGHT

Unexplained dead grass, bubbling water, and blowing dirt near a meter or along the pipeline route are signs of a leak.

## What should I do if I suspect a leak?

If you suspect that natural gas (or any combustible gas) is present, do not do anything that'll cause a spark. Natural gas is ignitable, and the tiniest spark can trigger an explosion. In this case:

- Please don't touch any electrical switches (don't turn them on or off).
- Do not use any electrical appliances or devices, including doorbells, garage door openers, telephones, elevators; do not even use your cell phone near a suspected leak).
- Do not light a match. Please stay away from any ignition sources or open flames (do not attempt to blow it out).
- Do not start any motor vehicle engines or electrical equipment.
- Do not attempt to repair a gas leak. (NOTE: Rock Energy provides natural gas to your home or business, but does not have a service department that repairs malfunctioning appliances.)
- Leave the building/area immediately. Go to a safe place, outside the smell of gas (certainly not downwind of it). Do not use a phone until you're safely away from the suspected leak. Then call Rock Energy at 866-752-4550 or contact your gas provider.

**CARBON MONOXIDE EMERGENCIES:** Please do NOT contact Rock Energy as the initial responder to a carbon monoxide emergency. Instead of contacting Rock Energy, you should contact first responders if faced with a carbon monoxide emergency, especially if medical attention is needed. In cases when Rock Energy is contacted by a member for a carbon monoxide emergency, they are referred to local emergency responders. If a member insists that Rock Energy responds, a gas technician will be dispatched, but a fee will be incurred by the member.

## Natural Gas Q&A

Rock Energy Cooperative operates about 180 miles of natural gas pipeline in northern Illinois with nearly 9,000 services. Our distribution system is regularly monitored and inspected for corrosion and leaks to ensure safe and reliable service. Please review this safety information so you can help us prevent pipeline damage, learn how to recognize a natural gas emergency, and take the appropriate action if an accident occurs.

### What is natural gas?

Natural gas is an economical and reliable source of energy that is completely safe when used properly. It is formed when layers of buried plants and animals are exposed to intense heat and pressure over millions of years. Because natural gas is lighter than air, it rises and dissipates into the atmosphere if it escapes from a pipeline. Underground, however, it may follow the path of least resistance, accumulating in a confined space or traveling to an ignition source. Natural gas is easily ignited by heat, sparks, or flames and can cause explosions.

### How is it transported?

Pipelines are the safest and most economical method of transporting natural gas, according to the National Transportation Safety Board. Because pipelines are buried underground, warning signs are used to indicate their presence along the right-of-way. The signs are clearly marked with the operator's name and emergency phone number. The pipeline right-of-way must remain free of structures, vegetation, and any other obstructions. Maintaining a right-of-way free of encroachments is essential to ensuring the safety and integrity of pipelines.

### How can I prevent pipeline damage?

Damage from digging is the most common cause of underground natural gas leaks. Even a small scratch in the pipeline coating may result in corrosion that could lead to a leak. Always call 8-1-1 before you dig or excavate to avoid hitting a natural gas pipeline or other buried utility line. Illinois law requires people to call at least two business days before any digging project. Utilities then will send a representative to the site so all underground lines can be marked. The call and service are absolutely free. Remember that Rock Energy maintains buried gas pipes up to your meter. All pipes beyond that are the member's responsibility and should be periodically inspected for corrosion and leaks.

If you have any questions about natural gas safety, we would be happy to provide you with further information. Just call us at 866-752-4550. We also encourage you to visit the web sites below to get more information about pipeline safety.

**Rock Energy:** [www.rock.coop](http://www.rock.coop)    **Call 811:** [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com)

**Diggers Hotline:** [www.diggershotline.com](http://www.diggershotline.com)

**JULIE (Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators):** [www.illinois1call.com](http://www.illinois1call.com)

**National Pipeline Mapping System:** [www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov](http://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov)

