

Pipelines deliver natural gas safely

Learn how to prevent damage, recognize potential problems

In recognition of National Pipeline Safety Day on June 10, Rock Energy Cooperative is informing members about its pipeline damage prevention program.

Rock Energy operates 173 miles of natural gas main in northern Illinois with more than 8,000 services. Nationwide, about 300,000 miles of transmission pipe provide natural gas to 69 million consumers, amounting to 25 percent of all energy used.

Pipelines are the safest and most economical method of transporting natural gas, according to the National Transportation Safety Board. Federal pipeline safety code requires that distribution systems comply with tough requirements for design, construction, testing, inspection, operations, and maintenance from the point of connection to the meter on your house.

Natural gas is completely safe when used properly. The following information will help you and your families stay safe around natural gas.

How can I recognize a natural gas leak?

- By smell: Natural gas is colorless and odorless, but Rock Energy and other gas providers add a chemical that makes it smell like rotten eggs so any leaks can be easily detected.
- By sound: A hissing or roaring sound coming from a natural gas line might be a sign of a leak.
- By sight: If you see unexplained dead or dying grass in an area, natural gas might be leaking. Dirt or debris blowing in the air and water bubbling in a puddle, pond, or creek are other signs of leaks.

What should I do if I suspect a leak?

If you smell a faint gas odor:

- Make sure all gas appliances and burners on your stove are turned off completely.
- Open one or more windows and wait a few minutes for the gas odor



Members of Rock Energy's natural gas department provide safety tips to Rockton firefighters.

to dissipate before investigating further.

- Check the pilot lights on your gas furnace, water heater, stove, and oven.
- Don't try to relight a gas furnace, water heater, or stove while you can still smell gas.
- If you need assistance relighting the pilot light, call a heating or plumbing contractor.

If you smell a strong odor:

- Leave the area immediately.
- Do not use the telephone or cell phone until you reach a safe location away from the suspected leak. Then call Rock Energy at (866) 752-4550 to report the leak's location.
- Do not light a match or turn on or off any light switches, flashlights, garage door openers, or other appliances because an electric arc might ignite the gas.

How can I prevent pipeline damage?

- Call 811 before you dig or excavate to avoid hitting a natural gas pipe-

line or other buried utility line. State law requires people to call at least two 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 free.

- Remember that Rock Energy maintains buried gas pipes up to the gas meter on your property. All gas pipes beyond that are the member's responsibility and should be periodically inspected for corrosion and leaks. Some examples are pipes that supply secondary buildings, such as a detached garage, or additional equipment, such as pool heaters or gas grills.

How can I get additional information?

If you have any questions about natural gas safety, we would be happy to provide you with further details. Just call us at (866) 752-4550 or e-mail questions@rock.coop.