

NATURAL GAS AND YOU.

A QUICK GUIDE TO NATURAL GAS SAFETY

KEY POINTS:

Know the signs of a leak

Your senses of smell, sight, and hearing are best to help you detect a gas leak

Know what to do

If you suspect a leak leave the area, go to a safe location, and call 911

Call before you dig

A quick, free, call to Ohio's 811 (OUPS) may help you avoid hitting a gas line

CITY OF HAMILTON CONTACTS

Engineering – 513-785-7280

Customer Service – 513-785-7100

Gas & Water and other natural gas inquiries – 513-785-7550

ONLINE RESOURCES

www.safegasohio.org

www.hamilton-oh.gov/utilities-safety-regulations



**DEPARTMENT OF
INFRASTRUCTURE**
HAMILTON, OHIO

The Basics of Natural Gas

Natural gas is an excellent source of energy for your home. It is economical, reliable and safe for the environment. Natural gas has a safety record that is outstanding, but like all sources of energy, it should be used wisely. Always put safety first when using natural gas appliances of any kind.

Natural gas is a nontoxic, colorless and odorless fuel that is lighter than air. This lighter-than-air quality is an important safety factor. If a leak develops, natural gas will mix readily with air and rise into the atmosphere.

As a safety measure, the natural gas piped to your home has a harmless odor, similar to rotten eggs, called mercaptan added to it so you can detect even the smallest amount of gas that might be leaking.

Signs of a Potential Natural Gas Leak



Smell – To help you smell a natural gas leak from a gas line or appliance, a familiar odor like rotten eggs is added to natural gas.



See – Near a natural gas leak, you might see dirt blowing, bubbling water or an area of dead vegetation.



Hear – A leaking natural gas line might make a hissing sound that you can hear.

Call Before You Dig

Call OHIO 811 Before You Dig – It's the Law

Did you know that unauthorized digging is one of the leading causes of natural gas leaks? By law, you must call the Ohio Utilities Protection Service (OUPS), Ohio 811, 1-800-362-2764, at least two working days before digging for any landscape or construction project on your property. Keep in mind that lines have been hit digging fence post holes, anchoring supports for decks or swing sets, planting trees, removing tree roots, installing concrete forming stakes and driving landscaping stakes into the ground.

When excavating near a buried gas line, the piping should be located in advance and excavation done by hand.

What To Do If You Suspect a Leak

It's Not Normal to Smell Natural Gas! If you do, even the smallest amount may indicate trouble! If you recognize any of the signs above, walk away from the area immediately.

- Do not try to stop or repair the leak yourself.
- If possible, eliminate any sources of ignition.
- Do not turn on/off light switches.
- Do not use lights/matches, do not smoke.
- Do not use a cell phone.
- Leave the area, go to a safe location and call 911!

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Tips to Keep Your Home Safe

- Always have your appliances installed and serviced by a qualified contractor and follow the directions for safe operation and care.
- Your gas appliances should have a bright blue flame when they are operating correctly. A clean flame means your appliances are burning efficiently and are properly adjusted.
- Gas appliance connectors should be periodically inspected for corrosion to avoid leaks. Move old appliances carefully to avoid damaging connectors and do not reuse old connectors.
- Check your appliances for proper ventilation. Never store or use flammable material such as solvents, cleaning agents, gasoline, kerosene, propane or butane bottles in any enclosure with a gas appliance.
- Do not use a barbecue grill indoors.
- Do not operate or repair small gasoline engines such as lawn mowers or leaf blowers in an enclosed area without proper ventilation.
- Do not use a range or oven to heat your living spaces.
- Keep all gas meters and vent piping clear of obstructions.
- Keep all gas appliances' direct outside vent pipes clear of obstructions.
- During winter months, keep outside gas meters and vent pipes clear of snow and ice. Use a broom to clear off the gas meter, not a shovel.
- Check your water heater temperature to confirm it is not above 120 degrees. Be aware of the possibility of hot water scalding before placing a child in the bathtub.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Under normal operating conditions, natural gas burns cleanly and safely. If the gas is not burning properly, or a gas appliance is not operating properly, incomplete combustion can occur and carbon monoxide may be produced. Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless and toxic gas that is potentially fatal.

In addition to natural gas, incomplete combustion of any fuel containing carbon such as propane, gasoline, kerosene and charcoal can produce carbon monoxide.

Flu-like symptoms are usually experienced by your entire family with carbon monoxide poisoning. Unlike the regular flu, if everyone in your family feels better when they leave the house but then their symptoms return when they come back to the house, your family could be exposed to carbon monoxide poisoning.

Installing a working carbon monoxide detector in your home, preventive maintenance and common sense, you can keep your home carbon monoxide free.



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CUSTOMER SERVICE LINE RESPONSIBILITY

As a natural gas customer, the City of Hamilton wants to make you aware of some important safety information related to customer gas service line responsibility.

What you need to know about maintaining your natural gas service lines:

- For your safety, all buried and exposed natural gas service lines are surveyed for leaks by the City of Hamilton every three years. If a leak is detected on a residential natural gas service, the City will replace the service. If a leak is detected on a commercial natural gas service, the City will provide the property owner a list of approved Operator Qualified (OQ) contractors that must complete the natural gas service replacement.
- If the buried or exposed natural gas service line is metallic, it should be periodically inspected for corrosion. Buried natural gas service lines that are not maintained are subject to potential hazards of corrosion and leakage.
- If you plan to do any excavation or digging near buried natural gas service lines, the natural gas service lines should be located in advance and digging should be done by hand. Before you dig or excavate, call the Ohio Utility Protection Service by dialing 811 or 1.800.362.2764 at least two (2) business days in advance.
- The maintenance of customer house/internal pipelines from the outlet of the natural gas meter to the furnace and/or other natural gas appliances is the customer's responsibility. Since these customer house/internal pipelines are either buried or inside the home, the customer is responsible for the maintenance of these customer house/internal pipelines.



To obtain help:

- Operator Qualified (OQ) contractors can assist in inspecting, repairing/replacing and locating customer natural gas service lines for commercial customers. A list of approved OQ contractors can be provided by the City of Hamilton Engineering Department.
- Plumbers and heating contractors can assist in inspecting, repairing/replacing and locating customer house/internal pipelines.
- This is a notice only. If you have any questions, please contact the Engineering Department at 513.785.7280.

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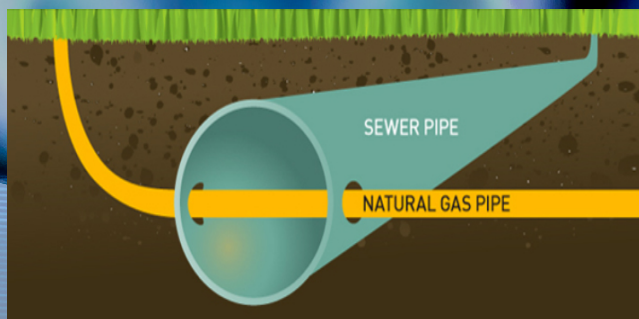
BE ALERT FOR CROSS BORES

Natural Gas Pipe Intersecting Sewer Pipes

A cross bore is when a natural gas main and/or service is installed through a sewer pipe. The City of Hamilton and its contractors use horizontal directional drilling to install natural gas mains and services underground during construction projects. This is a common approach used within the utility industry and is known for the very low disturbance to the environment unlike open trench installation. Current project specifications require that all sewer pipes crossed by a horizontal directional drilled gas main and/or service are to be inspected by videoing to confirm there has been no cross bore through the sewer pipe. However, old sewer pipes are not easily identifiable and may have not been visually inspected after project completion, leading to the possibility of a potential cross bore situation.

Understanding the Dangers of a Cross Bore

A cross bore in a sewer pipe can prevent sanitary or storm flow through the pipe and will, in time, cause a clog or blockage. If a plumber is unaware of the cross bore and does not proceed with caution when clearing the clog or blockage, they could cut through the gas main or service releasing natural gas. The release of natural gas may not be apparent at first but the natural gas could migrate toward the inside of the building, migrate to the sewers and then to the other surrounding buildings creating a potential explosive hazard.



Clearing a Sewer Clog or Blockage

All plumbers should take precaution when clearing a sewer clog or blockage. Plumbers should proceed as if a possible cross bore is the reason for the clog or blockage. It is suggested to have the sewer pipe visually inspected with equipment prior to beginning with a cutting tool. Once a cutting tool is inserted, pay attention for resistance and especially for resistance that does not resemble a tree root or other common items that cause clogs or blockages. Gas mains and services are plastic and typically either yellow, orange or black in color; so when pulling back a cutting tool look for the plastic or color material on the tool. Watch for any bubbles in either a toilet or the entry point of the cutting tool if the piping entered has standing water. Also, be sure to detect the odor of natural gas. If any outside excavation is required to clear the clog or blockage, be sure to call OUPS 811 to have utilities located prior to excavation.

If a Natural Gas Leak is Suspected

Inform everyone inside the building and evacuate right away. Do not use anything electrical or anything with a flame, do not use the phone until you are outside of the building and away from the building. Once in a safe location, call 911.

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