

The City of Waverly Gas Safety Pamphlet

Emergency Phone Numbers

217/435/4611 or 217/473/9822

Natural Gas Safety and You

Your safety is important to us and this pamphlet is designed to provide you and your family with important information that you should know about natural gas. Please help us keep natural gas safe for you. For your safety, please keep this brochure where it can be found quickly.

NATURAL GAS is America's most popular home heating fuel – heating more households than all other energy forms combined. Natural gas pipelines are the safest, most reliable and most efficient means of transporting and delivering the gas that our country depends on everyday. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, the natural gas delivery system has the best safety record of any energy delivery system. The safety record of natural gas utilities is outstanding — and it keeps getting better.

Natural gas is delivered to your home through a network of underground distribution lines. With more than 11 miles of gas lines and more than 627 customers, the City of Waverly takes our commitment of delivering safe, reliable, natural gas seriously.

1. RECOGNIZING AND REPORTING GAS LEAKS



What does Natural Gas Smell Like?

Pure natural gas is colorless and odorless. Before the gas is delivered to your home, an odorant called mercaptan is added to give gas its distinctive odor so you can smell a leak immediately. Mercaptan makes the gas smell like sulfur or "rotten eggs". Everyone in your family should learn to recognize this smell.

If you smell a faint gas odor near an appliance:

- Make sure all pilot lights are lit; if you find a pilot light extinguished, open windows and doors to vent the area; then wait 15 minutes before relighting the pilot light.
- If the odor persists, call the City of Waverly.

If you smell gas inside your home or business and the smell is a strong, persistent natural gas odor. Or you hear a hissing or leaking sound you should:

- Leave the building (home or business) immediately, taking everyone with you (including pets), and leave all doors and windows open behind you.
- Call the City of Waverly from a neighbor's home or nearby business - we respond to emergencies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In these conditions:

- **DO NOT** use telephones, cell-phones, computers, appliances, or garage door openers.
- **DO NOT** touch electrical outlets, switches or doorbells.
- **DO NOT** smoke, use a lighter, match or other open flame.

- **DO NOT** position or operate vehicles or powered equipment where leaking gas may be present.
- **DO NOT** re-enter the home to open doors or windows.

Recognizing an Outdoor Gas leak

- If you hit a gas line while digging, smell a strong gas odor in the air, see or hear any unusual occurrences such as: a high-pitched whistle or hissing sound, blowing dust, dead vegetation in a normally green area, continuous bubbles in an underwater area or ground fires, you may be observing signs of a leak in a natural gas line. Always use caution near an outdoor gas leak and recognize the possible hazards, such as fire, ignition or explosion.

In these conditions:

- **DO NOT** use any device or equipment that could generate a spark or a flame.
- **DO NOT** start up or shut down motor vehicles or electrical equipment.
- **DO NOT** use a telephone or cellular phone in or near the area where you observe signs of a leak.
- **DO NOT** attempt to repair or backfill any damaged or potentially damaged pipeline.

You should:

- Notify the City of Waverly immediately.
- Call 911, or contact your local fire, police or sheriff's department if there appears to be an immediate danger, and advise them of the location and nature of the situation.
- Abandon any equipment being used in or near the area. Evacuate the area and try to prevent anyone from entering.

2. RESPONSIBLE DIGGING STARTS WHEN YOU CALL THE ONE-CALL SYSTEM



Digging responsibly is the only way to dig. The alternative could mean disaster. Buried gas pipes are typically made of plastic or coated steel. The main lines are typically 2 or 4 inches in diameter and are located roughly two-feet below the surface, while service lines are typically half-inch to three quarter- inch in diameter and buried 12- to 18- inches below the surface. Anyone planning an outdoor project that requires digging, whether the project is large or small, should call the One-Call System to have your underground lines marked to avoid damage or injury. In Illinois, the One-Call System is also known as “JULIE”. (1-800-892-0123). This is a free service, and it’s the law.

The One-Call System will take information about planned excavations and distribute this information to its utility members. Within two working day of your call, a representative from each member utility company will mark the location of the underground facilities at the excavation site, gas, oil or petroleum will be marked in Yellow.

After the lines are marked, dig carefully. Buried lines may be within 24 inches on either side of the paint line or flags. Also, help children understand that a flag means someone is planning to dig in your neighborhood, and the flag will help them dig safely. Although these colorful flags may seem like toys to young children, it can be very hazardous if the flags are removed or relocated.

3. WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CARBON MONOXIDE



Most people know that carbon monoxide (CO) gas is dangerous. Yet few of us know where it comes from, how it affects people or how to recognize that it may be in your home. The City of Waverly strongly recommends the installation of a carbon monoxide detector in every home or business as one way to detect a possible CO problem. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper installation and location of a CO detector.

Where does carbon monoxide come from?

Carbon monoxide is created as a by-product of incomplete combustion. Poisoning and illness may occur when fossil fuels are burned without proper ventilation in close proximity to people. Potential sources of CO include automobiles, gas appliances, gas furnaces, chimneys, charcoal grills and portable kerosene heaters.

How does it affect people?

Carbon monoxide is tasteless, odorless and dangerous to people. Symptoms of poisoning caused by carbon monoxide exposure may initially be similar to the flu. As they progress, they may include the following: burning eyes, headache, fatigue, nausea, dizziness, confusion, shortness of breath, and unconsciousness.

How can I recognize if CO is in my home?

- Black soot on or around air registers, flues, burners or access openings to appliances.
- Condensation of moisture on inside windows (remember that humidifiers and vaporizers can also cause condensation).
- Dead or dying houseplants and animals (houseplants and pets are highly susceptible to carbon monoxide in the air).
- Abnormal flame characteristics, such as a yellow gas flame instead of blue, flame rolling out of the front of an appliance or flame lifting off the burner.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors that will sound an alarm when CO build up reaches unsafe levels.

What should I do if I suspect carbon monoxide in my home or my CO detector is sounding?

- If the alarm goes off, or you suspect carbon monoxide, get fresh air into the home or business by opening doors and windows and call 911.
- If anyone is experiencing symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning (burning eyes, headaches, dizziness, vomiting, and fatigue) call the Poison Control Center Illinois: 1.800.222.1222, and they will evaluate the exposure to CO and coordinate medical treatment.
- Call a qualified plumbing or heating professional to inspect your appliances for possible problems.

What other steps can I take to avoid CO in my home?

Before each heating season, have your heating system checked by a qualified plumbing or heating professional.

- Make sure appliance vents and exhaust ducts, such as those on water heaters, dryers and ranges, are not blocked, are in good condition and are properly connected to exhaust the combustion gases out of doors.
- Check your chimney/flue to make sure it is not blocked by dirt or bird nests. You can do this by inserting a mirror in the clean-out

- opening to view the top. Replace rusted vent pipes.
- Never operate a motor vehicle or other gas-powered engines in an enclosed space, such as a garage, because the engine exhaust can leak into the house. A CO build-up in the house can still occur even if the garage door is left open.
- When using an approved, unvented space heater for supplementary heat or an unvented natural gas fireplace, open a window an inch or more as stated in the space heater operating instructions.
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4. WATER HEATER SETTINGS



Use the temperature settings on your water heater to protect you and other members of your family from burns caused by excessively hot tap water. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends that consumers set their water heaters to no more than 120 degrees. You can check the hot water temperature in your home by holding a candy or meat thermometer under running hot water from the faucet for two minutes. If the temperature is more than 120 degrees, lower the water heating setting and recheck the temperature in a day or two. If you are uncertain about how to lower your water heater's temperature setting, contact a qualified plumbing or heating professional to assist you.

5. STORING AND USING COMMON FLAMMABLE HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

Take extra care when storing and using flammable liquids and other materials in areas where gas appliances operate. Gasoline, paint thinner and kerosene are flammable when exposed to heat. These products can produce invisible explosive vapors that can be ignited by a small spark or flame, even at considerable distances from the flammable liquids. For this reason, never use flammable liquids in the same room or area where a gas water heater is located. It is best to store flammable liquids in approved, labeled containers.

When using aerosol insect sprays or "bug bombs" in areas where a pilot light or other open flame is present, be sure the pilot lights are extinguished before you spray. Other common products, such as any type of aerosol spray, paper, nail polish and disinfectants, can also be dangerous if placed near an open flame or heat source. Prevent common household fires by always keeping flammable materials away from gas burning appliances

6. NATURAL GAS PIPING, FITTINGS AND CONNECTIONS



All gas piping, gas fittings and connections should be inspected regularly to ensure your safety. In particular, you may need to contact a qualified plumbing or heating professional if you are uncertain about the type of piping or connectors used in your home or if you have any concern about whether they are safe.

If your home is more than 20 years old, some of your appliances may have uncoated brass connectors. Flexible gas connectors are corrugated metal tubes used to connect gas appliances in your home to fuel gas supply pipes. Some older flexible gas connectors have a serious flaw at the end connections. Over time, the end connections can separate from the connector resulting in a serious gas leak that may cause a fire or explosion.

Therefore, any uncoated brass connector should be replaced immediately with a new stainless steel connector. Replacement connectors must be certified by the American Gas Association.

Preferred Materials for House Piping

The City of Waverly recommends the use of black iron pipe (Schedule 40) for natural gas piping inside your home. In addition, any metallic buried piping should be coated and cathodically protected.

Buried Fuel Lines

The City of Waverly operates and maintains all gas piping up to and including the meter. We do not maintain gas piping located beyond the gas meter. This piping belongs to the property owner. If you have any buried gas lines beyond the gas meter, it is recommended that

maintenance be performed to prevent potential hazards of corrosion and leaks by periodically inspecting for leaks and corrosion on metallic lines. If unsafe conditions are found, the lines should be repaired or disconnected. If excavating near your buried gas piping, locate the lines in advance and hand dig. A qualified plumbing or heating professional can assist in locating, inspecting and repairing your buried gas lines.

7. PIPELINE SAFETY AND RELIABILITY

The City of Waverly natural gas pipelines are safe and reliable...and we work to keep them that way. We are committed to public safety, protection of the environment and safe operation of our natural gas facilities. Our employees receive thorough and ongoing training to ensure the continued safe transport of natural gas to our customers. The U.S. Department of Transportation requires the use of signs to indicate the approximate location of underground pipelines. The City of Waverly installs markers for the safety of the public. It is against the law to vandalize or remove any pipeline marker. Markers are located at highway, railroad and navigable waterway crossings. Markers are also posted along the pipeline right-of-way. The markers display:

- The material transported in the pipeline.
- The name of the pipeline operator.
- A telephone number where the operator can be reached in the event of an emergency.

8. APPLIANCES, EQUIPMENT AND INTERIOR PIPING

Safety does not stop at the meter. It is your responsibility to ensure your gas appliances; equipment and interior piping are regularly inspected and properly maintained. Check for blockage, corrosion and malfunctioning equipment when the seasons change, or sooner, if you suspect a problem. A qualified plumbing or heating professional can help you determine whether your gas equipment and piping are operating properly.

CITY OF WAVERLY EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

This Gas Safety pamphlet is brought to you by the City of Waverly as a public service and to answer most questions you may have about your natural gas safety. However, if you have a question and can't find the answer here, please feel free to give us a call.

The City of Waverly business office hours are from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

City Hall Number
217-435-4611

Emergency after Hours, Weekends and Holidays
217-473-9822

The City of Waverly Address

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