



The  
Gas  
Company

A  Sempra Energy utility®

# NATURAL GAS SAFETY AT HOME

24 Hours a Day, 7 Days a Week

1-800-427-2200 or [www.socalgas.com](http://www.socalgas.com)



# SAFETY BEGINS AT HOME



**NATURAL GAS IS A CLEAN, EFFICIENT FUEL THAT ADDS COMFORT AND EASE TO YOUR LIFE. IT HELPS HEAT YOUR HOME, WARM YOUR SHOWERS, COOK YOUR FOOD, DRY YOUR CLOTHES AND MORE. NATURAL GAS IS SAFE WHEN USED WITH PROPER CARE. THIS GUIDE WILL HELP YOU UNDERSTAND IMPORTANT SAFETY STEPS TO TAKE WHEN USING NATURAL GAS SO THAT YOU CAN ENJOY THE COMFORTS NATURAL GAS PROVIDES.**

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## OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

### Delivering natural gas to your home

Providing safe and reliable natural gas and emergency response 24 hours a day, seven days a week is just part of our commitment to safety. We receive natural gas from multiple producers and suppliers located within our service area and outside California. We monitor the natural gas for quality and add a distinctive odor to detect leaks. We deliver it through our 94,000 miles of pipelines to more than 20 million customers.

### Pipeline maintenance and improvement

We routinely perform pipeline safety tasks, including patrolling, testing, repairing and replacing pipelines. We meet or exceed all federal and state requirements for safe pipeline operations and maintenance, including ongoing technical training and testing for employees. Our goal is to identify and resolve potential problems before a major problem occurs. The Gas Company<sup>SM</sup> also has implemented a rigorous integrity management program in highly-populated areas. We use the latest safety inspection tools to determine pipe condition and to help ensure that the pipelines are being maintained safely. In order to perform these important inspections, the area around our pipelines must be clear of shrubs, trees, fences and other structures.



### 24-hour emergency response

Our customer service representatives are available to respond to your needs 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Just call The Gas Company toll-free at 1-800-427-2200 or visit [www.socalgas.com](http://www.socalgas.com).

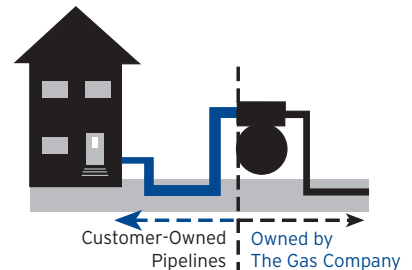
## HELP PREVENT GAS LEAK ACCIDENTS

### Maintaining your gas lines

If you're a property owner, you are responsible for maintaining all gas lines on your side of the meter. Such customer-owned gas lines include all piping that goes:

- From your gas meter to the appliances on your property.
- From a curbside gas meter to the home (when the meter is not right beside the home).
- From your meter underground to a building, pool/spa heater, barbecue or other gas appliances.

To properly maintain your gas lines, you should have them periodically inspected for corrosion and leaks, and repair any unsafe conditions immediately. A licensed plumbing or heating contractor can assist you in finding, inspecting and repairing your buried gas lines.



## Call 811 before you dig. It's free.

Before you dig, find out where buried gas and other utility lines are located. At least two working days before you dig, call **Underground Service Alert (USA)** by simply dialing **811**. They'll contact us and we'll locate and mark our utility-owned underground gas pipelines for you, free of charge.



To help prevent costly damage or injury, carefully use appropriate hand-digging tools within 24 inches of marked gas lines. For additional pipeline safety information go to [www.socalgas.com/safety/](http://www.socalgas.com/safety/).

## If you make contact with a pipeline

Notify The Gas Company immediately at **1-800-427-2200** for an inspection if you believe you made contact with a gas line. Even a slight gouge, scrape or dent to a pipeline or coating may cause a dangerous break or leak in the future.

## How to recognize a pipeline leak

Though rare, natural gas pipeline leaks can occur due to natural disasters, damage by third-party contractors or hidden corrosion. That's why it's important to learn how to spot – and respond to – a pipeline leak.

1. **SMELL** the air. We add a distinctive odor to natural gas so that leaks are easier to detect.
2. **LISTEN** for leaks. A hissing, whistling or roaring sound near a pipeline may indicate escaping natural gas. (Special markers show the location of most major pipelines.)

## 3. LOOK for clues:

- A damaged connection to a gas appliance
- Dead or dying vegetation over or near a pipeline
- A fire near a pipeline
- Exposed pipeline after an earthquake, fire, flood or other disaster

## What to do if you suspect a leak

- Stay calm
- Don't light a match, candle or cigarette
- Don't turn electrical devices on or off – not even a light switch
- Move away from where you suspect a leak and call The Gas Company or your local fire department

## CARBON MONOXIDE WARNING

### What causes carbon monoxide?

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that may be produced by appliances that are improperly installed, poorly maintained or misused. It can rob your body of oxygen. Carbon monoxide can be formed when carbon-based fuels, such as kerosene, gasoline, propane, natural gas, oil, charcoal or wood are burned with inadequate amounts of oxygen, creating a condition known as incomplete combustion. Although accidental carbon monoxide poisoning from natural gas appliances is statistically rare, the existence of carbon monoxide in the home can be caused by improper installation, poor maintenance or other appliance misuse or failure.

## Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning

The early stages of carbon monoxide poisoning produce unexplained flu-like symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, shortness of breath and mental confusion. Carbon monoxide displaces oxygen in the blood, so prolonged exposure can lead to death by asphyxiation.

## Signs of carbon monoxide presence

Be alert for:

1. A yellow, large and unsteady burner flame (except for decorative gas logs)
2. An unusual pungent odor when the appliance is operating
3. Unexplained nausea, drowsiness and flu-like symptoms

## If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning

If you suspect the presence of carbon monoxide:

- Stop using the suspected gas appliance immediately.
- Seek emergency medical attention if anyone in the home experiences carbon monoxide poisoning symptoms.
- Do not use the appliance until it has been inspected, serviced and determined to be safe by a qualified professional.

## MAINTAIN AND USE YOUR GAS APPLIANCES SAFELY

### All gas appliances

Good maintenance and proper use of all your gas appliances is essential to prevent exposure to carbon monoxide and fire hazards. For your safety, follow these steps for your natural gas appliances:

- Have your gas appliances inspected annually by a licensed heating or plumbing contractor or The Gas Company.
- Have a qualified, licensed contractor perform all gas appliance and venting repairs.
- Never store or use flammable products in the same room as or near any gas or heat-producing appliances. Flammable products include gasoline, spray paints, solvents, insecticide, adhesives, foggers, varnish, cleaning products and other pressurized containers. This will reduce the risk of flammable vapors being ignited by the main burner flame found in all gas appliances or the pilot flame found in many gas appliances.
- If a burner flame is yellow, large and unsteady, the appliance needs to be inspected immediately by a qualified professional.
- Never store anything near a gas appliance that might interfere with normal appliance airflow.



- In higher altitude areas, where snow can accumulate on rooftops, ensure that gas appliance intake and exhaust vents are clear of obstructions.
- When operating a decorative gas log, open the fireplace/chimney damper completely.
- Never use your oven, range or outdoor barbecue to heat your home because these appliances are not designed for this purpose.
- Although it is your responsibility to maintain your gas appliances, The Gas Company will perform appliance safety checks upon request.
- For appliance-specific safety tips, please review the next sections.

## Furnace Safety

It's important to maintain your furnace for safety and operating efficiency purposes. Follow the tips listed for the type of furnace in your home.

### FLOOR FURNACE

- Avoid lint build-up by vacuuming floor furnace regularly.
- Keep children away from the grill, as it gets very hot.
- Avoid fires – don't place rugs, furniture, or combustible items over the grill or block the air flow.

### WALL FURNACE

- Clean burner compartment of built-in vented wall furnaces once a month during heating season to prevent lint build-up.

### CENTRAL GRAVITY FURNACE

- Keep furnace heat registers free of lint and dust.
- Don't store items nearby that might stop the airflow.

### CENTRAL FORCED-AIR HEATING

- Most have a filter that cleans the air before heating and circulating it throughout the home. A clogged filter can reduce heater efficiency.
- Check your filter monthly for lint build-up during periods of furnace use and clean or replace it as necessary.
- When installing a new or cleaned filter, be sure to reinstall the front panel door of the furnace properly so it fits snugly. Never operate the furnace without the front panel door properly in place because doing so may create the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- If you need to replace your furnace, check for available rebates on qualified ENERGY STAR® models at [www.socalgas.com/energyefficiency/](http://www.socalgas.com/energyefficiency/).

### CAUTION:

**Unvented gas heaters are currently not legal in California.**

### Defective furnace recall

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has announced a furnace repair or replacement program for certain horizontally-mounted forced air furnaces manufactured by Consolidated Industries and located in attics.

The CPSC states that a licensed heating contractor should determine if the furnace has been installed correctly, if the burners or heat exchangers are damaged and whether the wood (surface area) under or near the furnace shows signs of damage, such as charring or blackening. If any of these conditions are found, the CPSC recommends immediate furnace replacement or repair. For details visit [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) or call them at 1-800-638-2772.

## Water heater safety

Follow these tips for your gas water heater:

- Water heaters installed in garages must be elevated so the pilot or other source of ignition is a minimum of 18 inches above the floor or installed per local building codes or the manufacturer's installation instructions.
- Earthquakes can cause improperly secured water heaters to move or topple. To help prevent this, strap your water heater firmly to the wall studs in two places – the upper third and lower third of the tank – using heavy bolts and metal straps. Be sure to place the lower strap at least four inches above the thermostat controls. Kits are usually available at hardware stores.
- Prevent scalding accidents – and trim energy costs – by setting your water heater thermostat at or slightly below the manufacturer's recommendation.
- If you need to replace your water heater, check for available rebates on qualifying high-efficiency models. Visit [www.socalgas.com/energyefficiency/](http://www.socalgas.com/energyefficiency/) for more information.

## FUMIGATION REQUIREMENTS

The Gas Company must shut off and turn on gas service before and after tented fumigation jobs. Fumigation contractors are no longer authorized to perform these services. There is no charge for this service. You or your fumigation contractor must call at least two business days prior to service shut-off. For service turn-on, advance notice of at least one business day is required. Call 1-800-427-2200 to schedule service.

## BE PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES

### Keep emergency supplies on hand

Though you can't prevent earthquakes or other natural disasters, you can prepare for them.



One important step is to have an emergency preparedness kit on hand. After a major quake, public safety workers may not be able to reach you right away, so include at least 72 hours worth of the following supplies for your safety and comfort:

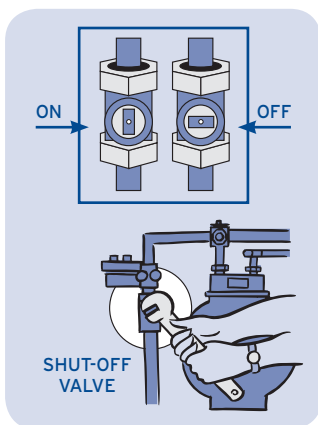
- First aid kit with handbook
- Essential medications and extra eyeglasses
- Special provisions for babies, the elderly, disabled family members and pets
- Bottled water (one gallon per person per day)

- Packaged, dried or canned food and any special dietary items
- Manual can opener
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Portable radio, flashlight and fresh batteries
- Extra set of house and car keys
- Fire extinguisher (A-B-C type)
- Cash

## How to shut off your gas

It's important to know exactly where your gas meter is located. It could be underground, in a cabinet or beside or under your house. Keep a 12" (or larger) adjustable wrench with your emergency preparedness supplies or next to the valve.

Take the adjustable wrench and turn the shut-off valve one-quarter of a turn in either direction, until the valve is crosswise to the pipe (see diagram).



**IMPORTANT:** Use caution when touching gas shut-off valves and meters. Faulty household appliances or faulty household electrical wiring could inadvertently introduce electricity to the gas meter. Electric bonding to or use of Southern California Gas Company gas service piping, gas risers or meter facilities for electric grounding is not permitted.

## Before an emergency

- Contact your area building department or permitting agency for local requirements on properly strapping or securing your water heater.
- Replace any semi-rigid aluminum or copper gas tubing with an approved flexible metal appliance connector.

## Gas appliance shut-off valves

- For safety, a shut-off valve should be installed at every gas appliance. If a leak occurs at a specific appliance, the valve will allow you to turn off the gas at the appliance rather than shutting off all gas service at the meter. Some valves require a wrench to turn them.

## After an emergency

- Do not turn off your meter unless you smell natural gas or hear it leaking.
- Check your water heater and furnace vents. If the venting system becomes separated during an earthquake, it could leak hazardous fumes into your home. Signs of an improperly vented appliance may include moisture on the inside of windows or an unusual odor when the appliance is operating.
- Do not use any electrical appliances – not even a light switch – until you're sure there are no gas leaks.

## After shutting off your gas

If you turn off your gas at the meter, leave it off. Don't turn it back on yourself. Have The Gas Company turn it back on and relight the pilots.



## More information available

We offer more safety information at [www.socalgas.com](http://www.socalgas.com).

To reach our customer service representatives

24 hours a day, seven days a week, call

**1-800-427-2200** toll free.



A  Sempra Energy utility®

*Glad to be of service.*®

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