



# Natural gas pipeline safety

You are an important partner in preventing natural gas emergencies. Please read this brochure to understand the preventive and protective steps taken to ensure your safety and the safety of those living and working near natural gas facilities.



*Energy you can depend on*



## Clean, efficient and safe natural gas

Natural gas is a clean-burning, low-cost source of energy used to heat homes, generate electricity and power industries. The underground pipes that distribute natural gas and the pipes that connect homes and businesses to the natural gas distribution system have outstanding safety records. In fact, nearly 63 million homes in America rely on clean, efficient and safe natural gas.

### Keeping our system safe

Safety is our No. 1 priority. We construct, operate, maintain and inspect our natural gas system in accordance with state and federal pipeline safety regulations.

To protect our natural gas pipeline system integrity, we:

- Design pipelines to ensure the safe delivery of natural gas.
- Maintain pipeline integrity management programs.
- Regularly inspect our natural gas system including patrols, leak surveys and corrosion inspection.
- Keep our workforce properly trained and qualified.
- Mark and map pipeline facilities.
- Provide training and educational materials to contractors and related businesses on safe digging practices.
- Work with local emergency responders to help prevent and prepare for emergencies.
- Educate the public on how to prevent, recognize and respond to natural gas leaks.

If a potential problem is discovered, crews respond and resolve the problem, following current industry standards and best practices.

### High-consequence areas

Pipeline operators must identify, prioritize, evaluate and validate the integrity of gas transmission pipelines that could, in the event of a leak or failure, affect high-consequence areas (HCAs). HCAs include certain populated and occupied areas near transmission pipelines. Some examples of HCAs include, but are not limited to, stadiums, recreational areas, religious facilities, office buildings, community centers, stores, hospitals, schools and daycare facilities.

### Pipeline locations and markers

Because natural gas pipelines are buried underground, we install above-ground markers, such as the one shown here, to identify their location.

Transmission pipelines normally are located in cross-country corridors or right of ways. Transmission pipeline markers can be found at road right of ways, railway and stream crossings, or fence lines along cross-country pipeline routes.

Distribution pipelines are normally located along streets and town or country roads, and directly serve customers along the route. Distribution pipeline markers are normally located in rural areas outside of incorporated cities and villages.

Although the markers indicate the presence of natural gas pipelines, they do not show the exact location or depth. They only indicate that a pipeline is present, the type of product inside the pipeline, the pipeline owner and an





## Recognizing a *natural gas leak*

emergency contact number. Report any unusual or suspicious activity near these markers to We Energies and your local police immediately.

We may not be the only pipeline operator in your area. To find out which pipeline operators have transmission facilities in your community, visit the National Pipeline Mapping System website at [npms.phmsa.dot.gov](http://npms.phmsa.dot.gov).

To perform mandated pipeline safety inspections, we must have clear access to the pipeline right of way. The areas on either side of the pipeline must be kept clear of debris, trees, sheds and other structures.

Leaks from a natural gas pipeline are rare, but you should know the warning signs. Use your eyes, ears and nose, and call us if you:

- **Smell an odor similar to rotten eggs.**
- **Hear an unusual hissing, whistling or roaring sound.**
- **See dirt or debris blowing into the air.**
- **See unexplained dead or dying grass or other vegetation near a pipeline.**
- **See water bubbling in a puddle, river, pond or creek.**

Natural gas is colorless, odorless and tasteless. That's why utilities add an odorant called mercaptan to natural gas distribution systems. Its unpleasant rotten-egg-like smell helps alert you in the event of a natural gas leak. However, larger transmission lines that operate at a higher pressure than the lines that distribute natural gas to homes may not be odorized. That's why it's important to look for and report any of the warning signs listed above.

**If you suspect a natural gas leak, call us immediately at 800-261-5325, the number on the pipeline marker or 911 from a safe location.** The unintentional release of gas could be hazardous and even cause death.

We have highly trained employees on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week to respond to natural gas emergencies. Our on-call availability, training programs, and longstanding relationships with local emergency officials and emergency responders help keep our communities safe.



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

**The leading cause of damage to our pipeline delivery system is third-party hits to our natural gas lines. Serious injury or death, property damage and service outages can occur if gas pipelines are struck.**

To prevent a hazardous situation while digging, planting or landscaping on your property, you must call 811 or contact your local one-call system at least three business days before you plan to dig. Representatives will mark utility-owned underground facilities on your property for free. So, don't forget to call – it's the law.

# For more information

Keep these numbers handy for emergencies, digging or safety information.

## Customer service

800-242-9137  
we-energies.com

## Digging

### Miss Dig

811 or 800-482-7171  
missdig.org

### National Pipeline Mapping System:

npms.phmsa.dot.gov

### American Gas Association:

aga.org

### Common Ground Alliance:

commongroundalliance.com

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If you suspect a natural gas leak or have a natural gas emergency, call us immediately from a safe location.

**24-hour natural gas emergency hotline: 800-261-5325**

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Este documento contiene información importante sobre seguridad de gas natural. Si necesita traducción llame al **800-242-9137** o visite **www.we-energies.com/espanol**. Si sospecha una fuga de gas natural o tiene una emergencia de gas natural, llámenos inmediatamente desde un lugar seguro.



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