



Natural gas and pipeline safety

How to protect your community



Energy you can depend on



Keeping your community safe

Every day, millions of people in Wisconsin rely on natural gas to heat homes and prepare meals. This safe, reliable energy source is delivered to our customers by a network of underground pipelines that have exceptional safety records. However, when not used properly or when it is uncontrolled, natural gas can be dangerous. Natural gas must always be respected.

As a public official, you have authority over properties, streets and roads near natural gas pipelines. You are an important partner in preventing natural gas emergencies and keeping your community safe. Our goal is to help you understand the preventive and protective steps we take for the safety of those living and working near natural gas facilities.

Safety and reliability come first

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration requires natural gas pipeline operators to develop and implement integrity management programs.

We are committed to operating safe natural gas pipelines that meet all local, state and federal regulations. Our integrity management programs provide a process for inspecting, assessing and maintaining natural gas pipelines, based on industry best practices.

As a natural gas pipeline operator, we must:

- Install and test natural gas pipelines in accordance with expected utility design and installation criteria.
- Identify high-consequence areas within our service territory.
- Periodically inspect condition of natural gas pipelines.
- Promptly address potential problems discovered during inspections.
- Communicate pipeline safety issues to public officials, emergency responders and general public.



Protecting high-consequence areas

Integrity management programs focus specifically on natural gas transmission pipeline safety in high-consequence areas, defined as highly populated areas or identified sites that include:

- Facilities difficult to evacuate – hospitals, prisons, schools or assisted-living facilities.
- Outside areas where 20 or more people gather – playgrounds, campgrounds, stadiums or beaches.
- Buildings occupied by 20 or more people on a regular basis – churches, office buildings and malls.



Pipeline maintenance and inspection

To protect our natural gas pipeline system, we regularly inspect pipelines through leak surveys and other methods. We also perform routine maintenance, such as corrosion control. We prioritize pipeline inspections in high-consequence areas, based on specific risks and threats. Such situations include extreme weather conditions and potential damage by excavators and homeowners who fail to have underground utilities marked before digging or who fail to use safe excavating practices. If a potential problem is discovered during an inspection, crews respond and resolve the problem, following current industry standards.



Our commitment to your community's safety

We work closely with local governments, elected officials and industry groups to ensure our pipelines stay safe and secure. Here are the things we do to keep communities safe:

- Design and install pipelines to ensure safe delivery of natural gas.
- Provide training and educational materials to contractors and related businesses on safe digging practices.
- Regularly inspect our natural gas system.
- Ensure our workforce is trained and qualified.
- Mark and map pipeline facilities.
- Invest in new technologies and pipeline integrity management programs.
- Work with local emergency responders to help prevent and prepare for emergencies.
- Educate public on natural gas leak prevention, recognition and response.

Partnering with emergency officials/responders

We regularly work with local emergency officials to respond to incidents involving natural gas pipelines. Employees are on call 24 hours a day to assist first responders with natural gas emergencies. Our employees are trained to operate utility equipment and help make situations safe in cooperation with efforts of emergency responders. To safely control the natural gas system, it is important that emergency responders allow our employees on incident scenes.

We provide specific information about emergency responses and training to police, fire and emergency-responder organizations. First responders can find safety information, free training materials and learn about scheduling a mock response drill at **www.we-energies.com/firstresponders**.

In the event of a natural gas emergency, our first priority is to protect human life. By working together, we can ensure that incident is managed in a way that the public, emergency responders and our crews remain safe.





Establishing safe land use/ development near pipelines

Because damage from digging is the most common cause of underground natural gas leaks, you and other local officials can help keep your community safe by establishing guidelines for construction and development near natural gas pipelines. Such guidelines assist us in pipeline system monitoring through routine maintenance activities and required state/federal inspections. Suggested guidelines include:

- Establishing set-back requirements for new construction and development near pipelines.
- Requiring easement holder consent as a condition of issuing permits for construction or development that may impact safe pipeline operation.
- Requiring pipeline operator involvement in early planning stages of road widening or grading, mining, blasting, dredging or other excavation activities that may impact safe pipeline operation.
- Requesting residents, excavators and land developers to contact natural gas companies for answers to questions about pipelines or locations.

Visit the Pipelines and Informed Planning Alliance at pipa-info.com to learn about practices for land use planning and development near pipelines.



What every community member should know

Knowing where buried natural gas pipelines are located before residents or contractors begin a digging project is the best way to avoid being injured and disrupting utility service in your community. Natural gas pipeline depth varies, and other utility services (telecommunications, sewers and drain lines, etc.) may be in the same area.

Damage from digging is the most common cause of underground natural gas leaks. Encourage all residents and contractors to “call before they dig” whenever they plan to landscape, install a fence or build a deck. It’s state law.



Calling before you dig is even easier than before - just dial 811

One easy phone call to 811 instantly begins the process of marking underground utilities in the public right of way. Local one-call centers contact the appropriate utility companies, which send crews to mark underground utilities within three business days. This service is free. You can call 811 or your state's local one-call center:



Wisconsin: Diggers Hotline 800-242-8511

Michigan: Miss Dig 800-482-7171

Note: Private facilities (such as a natural gas or electric line run to an outbuilding or barn) are not marked by this process. Locating contractors may locate your private facilities for a fee.



Farm safety

Calling your state's one-call center is especially important if farming activities in your community include deep plowing, fence post installation, trenching, leveling, tilling, subsoiling or other excavation work.

Natural gas pipeline locations

Many people in your community likely work or live near natural gas pipelines. Because pipelines are buried, natural gas companies use markers to show approximate location – particularly in rural areas. Color, size and design may vary, but all markers must display:

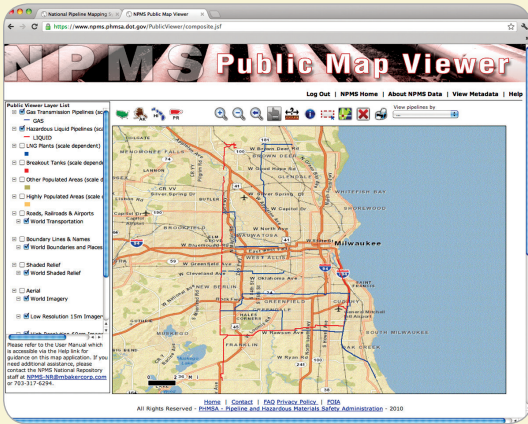
- Material transported in pipeline.
- Name of pipeline operator.
- Operator's phone number in case of emergency.

Markers may be anywhere along pipeline right-of-way, which typically run along a public street but also may be on or near private property. Pipeline owners have the right to restrict certain activities in pipeline right-of-way so they can access the area in an emergency or for maintenance.

For public safety, the following general guidelines should be observed on all pipeline rights-of-way to ensure there are no obstacles that may cause safety hazards and impede emergency and repair vehicles in the corridor:

- No structures, such as buildings, sheds and swimming pools.
- No trees or shrubs.
- No blasting.





National Pipeline Mapping System

You can learn more about pipelines in your community via the National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS), which provides contact information and data as well as maps of interstate and intrastate natural gas transmission pipelines. Since 2002, transmission pipeline operators are required to submit mapping information to the NPMS and to update their submissions annually. We submit data on the natural gas transmission pipelines that we own and operate. To find out who operates pipelines in your area, contact the NPMS at **www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov**.







Natural gas leaks - use your eyes, ears and nose

Leaks from natural gas pipelines are rare, but you should know the warning signs. Pay attention to normal conditions around pipelines and identify changes to those conditions. Use your eyes, ears and nose, and call us if residents or excavators:

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

Because natural gas is odorless, colorless and tasteless, we add an odorant. This makes even the smallest leak easy to detect. Transmission lines, which are larger and operate at a higher pressure than the lines that bring natural gas to homes, may not be odorized. That's why it's important to look for and report any of the other warning signs listed above.



If residents or excavators notice any warning signs:

- Leave the area immediately.
- Don't stop to open windows.
- Don't touch anything that might create a spark, such as a light switch, phone, cell phone or garage door opener. Even static electricity is hot enough to ignite natural gas.
- From a remote location, call us immediately at 800-261-5325, and a natural gas technician or crew will investigate.
- Excavators causing a natural gas leak must call 911 immediately.

**We Energies natural gas leak
and emergency: 800-261-5325**

For more information

Make the right call. Know these numbers for emergencies, digging or safety information.

Emergencies

Natural gas leak or emergency

800-261-5325

Power outage hotline

800-662-4797

Digging

Diggers Hotline (Wis.)

811 or 800-242-8511

Miss Dig (Mich.)

811 or 800-482-7171

General safety information

we-energies.com

Customer services

(Servicios bilingüe disponible – para Español, oprima el número cero y después el ocho)

800-242-9137

Email: customerservice@mail.we-energies.com