

## What pipeline safety engineers do

- Respond to customer complaints
- Annually spend over 350 days in the field conducting inspections
- Complete a comprehensive inspection of every gas utility at least once every three years
- Review all gas utility's maintenance records every year
- Review all gas utility construction standards for compliance with applicable safety standards
- Work with the US Dept. of Transportation on interstate pipeline projects in Wisconsin
- Make unscheduled inspections of utility construction projects
- Advise gas operators about pipeline safety



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

## Land use/development near pipelines



Damage from digging is the most common cause of underground natural gas leaks. Help keep communities safe by establishing guidelines for construction and development near natural gas pipelines. The development of guidelines will assist natural gas companies in monitoring the pipeline system through routine maintenance activities and required state and federal inspections.

### Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

P.O. Box 7854  
Madison, WI 53707-7854  
Telephone: 608-266-5481  
Toll free: 888-816-3831  
Consumer affairs: 608-266-2001 / 800-225-7729  
TTY: 608-267-1479 / 800-251-8345  
Fax: 608-266-3957  
Website: <http://psc.wi.gov>

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## Natural Gas Pipeline Safety



## Who makes the rules ?

The federal government sets minimum safety standards for all pipelines. The federal government also makes and enforces rules for interstate gas pipelines. However in Wisconsin, the Public Service Commission (PSC) makes and enforces rules for intrastate (within our state) pipelines. State and federal engineers work together to achieve the goal of public safety.



## Who are the PSC safety engineers?

The PSC's safety program uses a team of engineers. These engineers spend months in training on gas pipeline safety. They advise gas pipeline operators about gas safety and inspect the gas system and company records. They monitor pipeline construction, operations and maintenance activities. If it's not exactly right, they make sure it's corrected. Their job is to keep the public safe by enforcing the pipeline safety code.

## Detecting leaks

Natural gas is one of the safest, most reliable and environmentally friendly fuels in use today, but leaks can occur.

- **Look:** Blowing dirt, bubbling streams or ponds, dry spots in moist areas or dead vegetation surrounded by green, live plants may indicate a gas leak.
- **Listen:** An unusual hissing sound near gas lines or appliances is an indication of a natural gas leak.
- **Smell:** In its raw state, natural gas is colorless and odorless. Utility companies use a substance called mercaptan to create the familiar, rotten egg like odor associated with natural gas. Take action even if you only detect a slight odor of natural gas.

## If you detect a leak

**Leave.** Leave the area immediately do not try to find or stop the leak.

**Don't touch.** Do not smoke, use a cell phone or a flashlight. Do not turn on or off any lights or appliances or operate any vehicle or equipment that could create a spark.

**Dial.** From a location away from the leak immediately call your local gas provider and 911. Wait for the gas company and fire department to arrive. Do not go back into any building where you smell gas.

## Know where to dig

The best way to avoid disrupting utility service in your area or being injured is to know the location of buried natural gas pipelines. The depth of natural gas pipelines varies and there may be other utilities buried in the same area.

The most common cause of underground natural gas leaks is damage from digging. Encourage your neighbors and contractors to "call before they dig" whenever they plan to landscape, install a fence, build a deck or do any other kind of excavating, anywhere. It's state law.

## Before you dig - dial 811

One easy phone call to 811 instantly begins the process of getting underground gas pipelines and other utilities marked on residential, public or commercial property. Diggers Hotline will contact the appropriate utility companies, who send crews out to mark the location of underground utilities within three days. The service is free of charge.

