Safety is our top priority

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Virginia Natural Gas operates, secures and maintains the pipelines in our service territory. With safety being our highest priority, we adhere to federal, state and local pipeline safety regulations by performing extensive quality control checks. We also conduct visual inspections, routine maintenance and leak surveys of our pipeline system, up to and including the meter located on your property.

As our partner in safety, we ask that if you see someone surveying or working with the gas meter on your property that you call us at **1.866.229.3578** to inquire about the purpose of their work rather than raising your questions or concerns with them directly.

Avoiding carbon monoxide

Natural gas is a safe fuel source. However, incomplete combustion of any fuel – charcoal, gasoline, wood or even natural gas – produces carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide is poisonous and has no odor, taste or color. Carbon monoxide detectors are helpful, but they are no substitute for using equipment safely. This includes having your appliances inspected at least once a year by a certified contractor.

For a referral to one in your area, visit our website or call **1.866.229.3578** and choose option five.

Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing (CSST)

CSST is a flexible, stainless steel pipe used to supply natural gas and propane to appliances and equipment in homes and businesses.

Coated with a yellow or black exterior plastic coating, CSST is usually mounted alongside floor joists, inside wall cavities or on top of ceiling joists and attic spaces.

Recent updates to safety guidelines concerning the installation of CSST specify that proper bonding and grounding of this kind of pipe significantly reduces the risk of damage and fire from a lightning strike as well as the chances of possible electric shock by someone who comes in contact with it.

While Virginia Natural Gas does not use CSST in our work and maintenance, it is possible that CSST was used when your gas equipment or appliance was installed at your premise. If you suspect you may have CSST at your home or business, have a certified contractor or plumber perform an evaluation. If it is found that you do have CSST, a bonding device may need to be installed by a professional to reduce chances of damage, fire and injury.

Safety regarding sewer lines

It is important you be aware of a remote, yet potentially hazardous condition that could exist within your sewer line.

Directional boring and cross bores

Utilities install underground lines using trenchless technology known as horizontal directional drilling (or directional boring) to pull cable, conduit and pipe underground. This installation method causes minimal impact to the surrounding area and minimizes environmental disruption. There are instances when an underground sewer line is not properly identified prior to directional boring activities, which can possibly result in a natural gas pipe being inadvertently "pulled" through a sewer line. **This resulting condition is known as a "cross bore." If a natural gas pipe has been bored through the sewer line, the gas pipeline could be damaged, resulting in a loss of service and a potentially hazardous leak.**

Removing sewer blockages safely

If your sewer line backs up, we recommend hiring a professional drain cleaning ("rooter") company or sewer contractor. While calling **811** is required before doing any digging to repair the blockage, the safest method for clearing the blockage, if it is in a yard and no digging is required, is to have all underground utilities on your property located by also calling **811**. If it is determined that underground natural gas pipes intersect with your sewer line, the drain cleaning company or sewer contractor should use a camera to visually inspect the blocked line to ensure no gas pipes, cables or conduit exist within the sewer line.

While it is common practice to use a mechanical rotary device to cut out the blockage, doing so without locating the underground utilities or without a visual camera inspection of the sewer line could be dangerous.

If a natural gas pipe is found in your sewer line:

- **Stop** all work immediately.
- **Call** Virginia Natural Gas at **1.877.572.3342.**
- **Report** it as a natural gas emergency.
- **Be sure** to let the customer service representative know that you have discovered a cross bore. We will take the appropriate steps to remove the natural gas line and make the area safe.

Para solicitar una copia de esta información en español, llame 1.866.229.3578

Never try to find a leak yourself

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

Stay alert and safe

Natural gas is a safe and reliable energy source. While leaks are uncommon, caution should be exercised in the event of a suspected natural gas leak. Natural gas is colorless and odorless, so we add a chemical odorant called mercaptan for easy detection. This odorant has a distinctive, "rotten egg" type odor.

If you detect even a small amount of this odor in the air:

- **Do not** try to identify the source or stop the leak yourself.
- **Leave** the area immediately and move a safe distance away from the potential leak, while avoiding any action that may cause sparks.
- **Avoid** using any sources of ignition, such as cell phones, cigarettes, matches, flashlights, electronic devices, motorized vehicles, light switches or landlines, as natural gas can ignite from a spark or open flame, possibly causing a fire or explosion. Natural gas is non-toxic, lighter than air and displaces oxygen. In severe cases, if not used properly, natural gas can also lead to asphyxiation.
- **Call** Virginia Natural Gas at **1.877.572.3342** or dial **911** once you are away from the area of the leak and in a safe place.

Information about transmission pipelines operating in your community is available through the **National Pipeline Mapping System** (NPMS) and is online at **https://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov**.

Natural gas meter safety

Virginia Natural Gas owns and is responsible for maintaining the gas lines and meter that deliver natural gas to your home or business. We must have full access to our equipment for routine maintenance and safety inspections. Please do not sit, stand or place items on the meter or chain anything to it. Also, keep the meter clear of obstructions that can pose a potential danger to our employees, damage it or prevent us from reading it.

You are responsible for maintaining the natural gas-burning appliances within your home or business and on your property, as well as the gas lines that run from the meter to those gas-burning appliances – indoors and outdoors, above and below ground. Don't forget that you may have gas lines extending to yard lights, grills, pool heaters and garage or workshop heaters.

Should we need to enter your home or business for a service visit or your property to access our gas lines and/or meter, please stow your pets for their and our employees' safety.

- **Meter/regulator relocation** – If the natural gas meter on your property needs to be moved, call Virginia Natural Gas to have a qualified service representative perform the work. Moving or tampering with a meter or regulator can cause a potentially hazardous natural gas leak.
- **Snow and ice** – Be mindful that snow or ice covering a natural gas meter or the outside venting of a furnace, water heater or clothes dryer can cause hazardous buildup of carbon monoxide. Use your hands or a broom, and not mechanical equipment or a shovel, to clear snow from meter and vents.

Natural gas appliance and equipment safety

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency:

- It's important that you have your furnace inspected by a qualified specialist according to manufacturer guidelines to ensure that it is in good working condition. Do not attempt repairs yourself unless you are qualified.
- Be sure all furnace controls and emergency shut offs are in proper working condition.
- Keep trash and other combustible material away from your heating and water heating systems.
- Keep natural gas vents unobstructed and free of debris. Some direct-vent and high-efficiency appliances have direct side wall outdoor vents and air intakes that could become obstructed during heavy snowfalls.

For more natural gas safety information, visit **virginianaturalgas.com/safety.**

Online Survey: Please take a moment to complete an online survey about natural gas safety and you at **surveymonkey.com/r/LVTMC5L** to help us make sure we are keeping our communities safe.

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