

Excavator safety on Cape Cod

Hitting a natural gas pipeline has serious consequences. Even a tiny gouge, scrape or dent may cause a leak that could lead to a catastrophic fire or explosion.



Notify 811 before you dig

- State law requires that all excavators contact Dig Safe® at least 72 hours (excluding weekends and legal holidays) prior to digging on public or private property. At no cost to you, Dig Safe will notify underground facility owners in the immediate area so the location of buried pipelines and other utility lines can be marked prior to your excavation.
 - Call 811 or use the Quick-Ticket online request system at digsafe.com.
 - Contact Dig Safe for any digging project, no matter how small. Even shallow excavation jobs can be a risk if you don't know where underground lines are buried.
- Before you call, pre-mark your proposed dig area with white paint, flags and/or stakes to help locators more easily identify and mark affected utilities.
- Wait for utilities to be marked before digging.



Learn to recognize and respond to gas leaks

Not all gas is odorized, so do not rely on your nose alone to detect a leak. Be alert for any of these gas leak warning signs:

- A distinctive, sulfur-like odor
- A hissing, whistling or roaring sound
- Dirt blowing into the air from a hole in the ground
- Continuous bubbling in water
- Dead or dying vegetation (in an otherwise moist area) over or near a pipeline
- A damaged connection to a gas appliance
- Exposed pipeline after a fire, flood or other disaster

If you contact a natural gas pipeline and/or suspect a gas leak, assume there's a danger: Warn others, leave the area quickly and stay away until utility personnel say it is safe to return. Do not use matches, lighters or anything electrical – even a phone, garage door opener, or light switch. Leave the excavation open, and do not attempt to stop the flow of gas. From a safe location, call 911 and National Grid.



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Dig with care

- Colored flags and paint marks show you only the approximate location of utility lines and not how deep they are buried. Before you can safely work near a marked gas pipeline, you must first hand-dig to expose the line and verify its exact location and depth.
 - If you cannot verify the location of a marked pipeline, STOP digging and contact 811 immediately.
- Do not use mechanical excavation equipment within the "tolerance zone," which spans the width of a marked utility line plus 18 inches from each indicated outside edge. Hand-dig with a rounded shovel or use vacuum technology within this safety zone.
- Cast iron natural gas mains are vulnerable to damage when the earth around or near them is moved in any way. Notify National Grid immediately when your excavation may encroach on a cast iron natural gas main by crossing its path or even running parallel nearby.
- If the tracer wire installed with a plastic underground natural gas line is broken or compromised during your excavation, inform National Grid immediately.



Watch out around pipeline markers

- High-visibility markers with National Grid's 24-hour emergency phone number indicate the general location of our high-pressure natural gas pipelines.
- If you notice any type of suspicious activity near a pipeline marker or you see a marker has been damaged, call National Grid immediately at the number listed on the marker.
- For security purposes, these markers do not show the exact location, path, depth or number of gas pipelines in the area. In addition, pipelines may not follow a straight course between markers.
- Never use pipeline markers or maps as a substitute for calling 811 to have all utility lines in your dig area located and marked.



Smell Gas. Act Fast.

In a gas emergency, call 911 and National Grid 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Massachusetts: 911 and 1-800-233-5325