

# First responder utility safety bulletin

Fall 2024



## Law enforcement safety for utility hazards

As a law enforcement officer, you're often first on the scene for natural gas leaks and downed power lines. Learn proper procedures to protect yourself, support firefighters and utility personnel, and keep the public safe during these potentially catastrophic events.



### Natural gas leaks

#### General precautions

If you are called to the scene of a suspected natural gas leak, request the response of the local fire department and contact National Grid through your dispatcher. Take these precautions while you wait for firefighters and utility personnel to arrive:

- Park away and upwind from the area, and do not park over manholes or storm drains.
- Immediately evacuate the area **330 feet** in all directions, if possible. Clear all buildings of occupants and clear the area of bystanders. For large leaks, consider downwind evacuation for at least a half mile.
- Be alert to risks from migrating natural gas and evacuate accordingly.
- Secure the area to prevent others from entering and reroute traffic if necessary.
- Make sure there is a clear path to the incident site for firefighters and utility personnel.
- Eliminate potential ignition sources, such as flame-producing devices and anything that could spark.
  - Avoid using light switches, garage door openers, e-cigarettes and vape pens, and prevent their use by others.
  - Do not step on doormats. Friction from shoes or boots could create a spark of static electricity.
  - Do not ring doorbells; knock instead.
  - Use intrinsically safe radios and flashlights.
- Never crimp, block or bend damaged gas lines in any way.

#### Outdoor gas leaks

Contact National Grid immediately to shut off the gas. Never try to operate an underground pipeline valve or relief valve.

A gas valve is closed when the valve lug is perpendicular, or crosswise, to the gas pipe.



#### Indoor gas leaks

If you suspect an indoor gas leak or you must shut off gas to a structure due to an earthquake or other natural disaster, you may close the valve on a gas service meter or appliance supply line (provided you have been trained to do so). Inform National Grid of any gas service valve that has been closed and do NOT reopen it under any circumstances. Only utility personnel may restore gas service.

#### Ventilation precautions

Firefighters will not ventilate unless they are certain the gas is off and all ignition hazards have been eliminated. Alert National Grid through your dispatcher if the situation warrants a discontinuation of electric service to a building. Never ventilate with occupants or personnel inside.

### Downed power lines

If you know or even suspect that a power line is down, contact National Grid through your dispatcher immediately and take these precautions:

- Treat ALL downed power lines as energized, even if they do not hum or spark.
- Keep yourself, the public and all vehicles a safe distance away from downed power lines and objects that may be energized: **at least 30 feet away** from downed distribution lines and **100 feet away** from downed transmission lines.
- Do NOT rescue anyone near a downed power line until the National Grid on-site representative confirms the line has been de-energized and grounded.
- Maintain a safety perimeter to keep the public far away from the area until National Grid personnel give the all-clear.



### Vehicle-pole incidents

#### If occupants face no imminent danger

If a power line is down on or near a vehicle, anyone who touches the vehicle and the ground at the same time will be shocked. Keep yourself and the public a safe distance away and provide this guidance to vehicle occupants:

- Instruct occupants to drive the vehicle away from the power line if this can be done safely. Once they are **at least 30 feet away** from a downed distribution line – or **100 feet away** from a downed transmission line – they can exit the vehicle normally.
- If the vehicle cannot be safely moved and occupants do not face any immediate danger, instruct them to stay in the vehicle until National Grid personnel give the all-clear. Staying in the vehicle is their best protection against electric shock.

#### If occupants must exit the vehicle due to fire or other danger

If firefighters are not yet on scene and vehicle occupants are in imminent danger, instruct occupants on the "jump and shuffle" technique. From a safe distance, demonstrate and talk them through these steps:

- Do NOT step out of the vehicle and do NOT touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time.
- Jump clear of the vehicle and land with your feet together.
- Shuffle away with small steps, keeping your feet close together and on the ground at all times.
- Continue shuffling until you are **at least 30 feet away** from a downed distribution line and **at least 100 feet away** from a downed transmission line.

**Keep yourself, your team and the public safe this fall. Visit [firstresponder.ngridsafety.com](https://firstresponder.ngridsafety.com) today to register and complete your FREE utility safety training.**

To report emergencies, call **911** and **National Grid** immediately.



Know what's below.  
811 before you dig.

In case of gas emergencies:

Long Island and the Rockaways:  
**911 and 1-800-490-0045**

Metro New York:  
**911 and 1-718-643-4050**

Upstate New York:  
**911 and 1-800-892-2345**

Massachusetts:  
**911 and 1-800-233-5325**

In case of electric emergencies:

Upstate New York:  
**911 and 1-800-867-5222**

Massachusetts:  
**911 and 1-800-465-1212**

**IMPORTANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS – PLEASE READ PRIOR TO USE.**