



## Tips of the trade

Welcome to National Grid's Tips of the Trade for first responders. These tips are intended to help you respond safely and effectively to incidents involving natural gas and electricity. Please review them with your team.

### Responding to gas odorant spills and fires



National Grid uses an odorant called *mercaptan* to make natural gas smell like sulfur or rotten eggs. Mercaptan is stored in liquid and gas form in tanks at processing plants, metering stations and regulating stations. Under normal use, mercaptan in natural gas is non-hazardous; however, concentrated mercaptan liquid is considered both hazardous and flammable.

#### Wear PPE and SCBA for any mercaptan spill

Mercaptan is a skin and eye irritant. High exposures can cause muscle weakness and respiratory paralysis. Wear full personal protective equipment (PPE) and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) in the presence of any mercaptan spill, whether large or small.



#### Use ERG Guide 131

The mercaptan compound typically used within National Grid's service territory is a mixed mercaptan, predominantly **Tertiary Butyl Mercaptan (TBM)**. TBM is highly flammable and toxic. Eliminate ignition hazards in the spill area and follow these precautions from Guide 131 of the Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG):

- Isolate the spill area for at least 50 meters (150 feet) in all directions. Increase this distance in the downwind direction, as necessary.
- If TBM ignites, use dry chemical, carbon dioxide, water spray or alcohol-resistant foam to extinguish the flames.
- If a tank, rail car or tank truck carrying TBM is involved in a fire, isolate and consider initial evacuation for 800 meters (one-half mile) in all directions.

#### Do NOT use water to disperse a spill

Mercaptan has highly toxic and long-lasting effects on aquatic life. Do not disperse the spill with water and do not allow runoff from the spill or firefighting activities to enter drains, soil or waterways.

Instead, block off nearby storm drains and sewers. Absorb the spill with sand, earth or other non-combustible material and collect it for disposal by a licensed waste management company. If mercaptan does contaminate waterways, inform the proper authorities.

For more first responder safety information, visit [firstresponder.ngridsafety.com](https://firstresponder.ngridsafety.com).

To report emergencies, call **911** and **National Grid** immediately. Always call **911** if you suspect a gas leak!



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.**