



About mercaptan

Mercaptan is a chemical odorant that National Grid adds to natural gas to give it a distinctive smell. Natural gas in its pure form is colorless and odorless. Mercaptan creates the sulfur-like odor that helps you recognize when natural gas is present.

Why we add it to natural gas

National Grid adds mercaptan to natural gas for your safety. Its strong, unpleasant odor serves as an early warning system, alerting you to potential gas leaks before they become dangerous. This odorization is required by state and federal regulations, and National Grid regularly conducts tests to ensure the gas delivered to our customers meets proper odorization levels.

Mercaptan safety

The mercaptan in natural gas is safe. It is added in very small amounts – just enough to create a noticeable smell without posing any health risks. The purpose of mercaptan is purely for leak detection. If you smell the distinctive odor, it means you need to take action, but the mercaptan itself is not harmful.

Odor fade and why it matters

Once odorized natural gas leaves our distribution system, certain situations may cause the mercaptan odor to fade. This typically occurs when mercaptan is filtered out or absorbed by pipes, soil, concrete or other materials. Some people may also have difficulty detecting the odor due to a diminished sense of smell, odor fatigue from prolonged exposure, or other strong odors masking the gas smell.

Odor fade is a safety concern because you might not smell gas even when it's present. So, never rely on your sense of smell alone to detect a natural gas leak. Be alert for these other indicators as well:

- 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
- An exposed pipeline after a fire, flood or other disaster
- A damaged connection to a gas appliance



If you suspect a gas leak

If you smell gas or suspect a leak, take these steps immediately:

- 1. Warn others and leave the area.** Get everyone out of the building or area where you smell gas.
- 2. Do NOT use** light switches, phones, appliances, electronics, garage door openers, doorbells, radios, TVs, matches, lighters, cigarettes or vape pens. A spark from any of these items could ignite leaking gas, causing a fire or explosion.
- 3. Call 911 and National Grid** from a safe location away from the area. Be the one to call 911. Do not assume someone else will call.
- 4. Do NOT return to the building or area** until National Grid personnel tell you it is safe to do so.



National Grid is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to respond to natural gas emergencies. When in doubt, call! We would rather investigate and find nothing than have you take a risk.

**Smell Gas. Act Fast.
Be the one to call 911.**

Massachusetts

911 and 1-800-233-5325

New York

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