

Natural gas facts

It is naturally odorless

That unusual smell is a harmless chemical that we add to natural gas to help you detect leaks. We add this rotten egg-like odorant as a safety precaution because natural gas has no odor of its own.

It is nontoxic (not poisonous)

If you inhale it, nothing harmful will be absorbed into your blood.

It is lighter than air

If it escapes into the atmosphere, it dissipates rapidly. Heavier-than-air gases like propane and gasoline fumes settle and accumulate near the ground where ignition sources are more common.

It is colorless

When mixed with the proper amount of air and ignited, invisible natural gas burns with a clean, blue flame. It is one of the cleanest-burning fuels, producing primarily heat, carbon dioxide and water vapor.

It burns only when properly mixed with air

It will only ignite when there is an air-and-gas mixture between five and 15 percent natural gas. Any mixture containing less than five percent or greater than 15 percent natural gas will not ignite.

To reach Dominion Energy, please call:
800-323-5517

or visit our website at:
DominionEnergy.com

To report gas line breaks, leaks or odors,
please call:
800-767-1689

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Earthquake Preparedness and Natural Gas

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No one can predict when an earthquake will occur or how much damage it will cause. In many cases, natural gas pipeline systems have proven remarkably resistant to earthquake-related damage.

Recently installed natural gas pipelines are made of high-strength steel or polyethylene plastic. These materials are flexible enough to withstand significant earth movement without sustaining damage.

The information in this brochure may be helpful if your home or pipes are damaged in an earthquake.

What is natural gas?

Natural gas flows from deep inside the earth into wells. From there it enters large transmission pipelines where it is moved along with the help of compressors. After traveling many miles, the natural gas enters Dominion Energy's distribution system and is sent through a network of smaller pipes to homes and businesses.

Millions of people use natural gas to cook their meals, heat their water and warm their homes. Natural gas is naturally odorless, but a rotten egg-like odorant as is added as a safety precaution for easy leak detection.

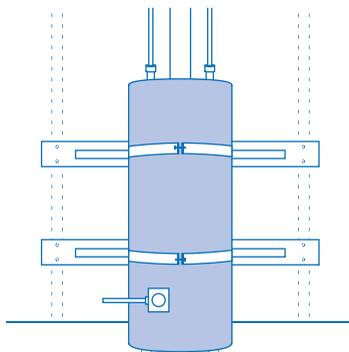
What should I do if I smell natural gas?

- Evacuate the building or area immediately;
- Do not use light switches, telephones or other electrically operated devices that may spark and ignite the gas;
- Do not light a flame;
- Do not start a motor or vehicle; and
- Call Dominion Energy at 1-800-767-1689 or dial 911 from a safe distance.

How can I prepare for an earthquake?

Secure your water heater

One of the most common types of earthquake damage is broken gas and water lines resulting from unsecured water heaters. A full water heater is very heavy and, if unsecured, can move during an earthquake. If it moves too far or falls over, it is likely to break both water and gas lines.



Emergency-preparedness experts recommend securing the water heater to the floor or wall to prevent such damage and to preserve the water it contains. Having a supply of clean drinking water is very important during an emergency, and your water heater can be a good source. To secure your water heater, you can call a contractor or do it yourself.

Know how and when to shut off natural gas at the meter after an earthquake

It may not be necessary to turn off your natural gas meter following an earthquake.

When the San Francisco Bay area was rattled by an earthquake in 1989, for example, 156,000 natural gas customers turned off their meters. According to the local natural gas utility, this action was necessary in only about 2 percent of the cases. Since natural gas meters should be turned back on only by the utility, many of these customers waited extended periods — five to seven days or longer — for their gas to be restored.

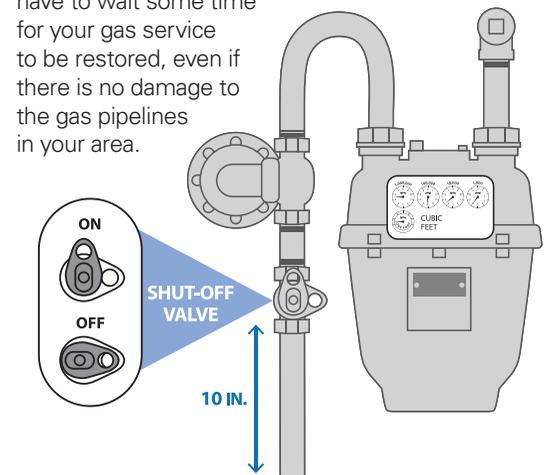
You can avoid such inconvenience by knowing when to turn off your gas meter in an earthquake. This is especially important during the winter months when your furnace is running.

You should shut off your gas at the meter if:

- There is structural damage to your home;
- You smell natural gas;
- You hear natural gas leaking;
- There is a fire; or
- Dominion Energy requests that you do.

Caution: Do not shut off the gas if doing so jeopardizes your safety.

The meter shut-off valve is located next to the meter as shown. Use a wrench to turn the valve a quarter turn in either direction to the "off" position shown in the illustration. If you turn the meter off, do not attempt to turn it back on yourself. Natural gas meters should be turned on only by Dominion Energy. Depending on the severity of the earthquake and the number of gas meters that are turned off, you may have to wait some time for your gas service to be restored, even if there is no damage to the gas pipelines in your area.



Follow these tips to help ensure you, emergency responders and Dominion Energy have quick access to the meter:

- Keep the dirt around your meter at least 10 inches below the shut-off valve;
- Maintain appropriate space on either side (12 inches) and in front (36 inches) of your meter; and
- Keep your meter clear of vegetation, fences, etc.