

## **NATURAL GAS SAFETY AWARENESS**

Natural gas is a colorless, odorless, tasteless and lighter than air gas that readily ignites in the presence of air. Since the gas is odorless, the natural gas provider treats the gas with mercaptan, an odorant, which gives the gas an acrid odor similar to rotten eggs. Natural gas enters the campus through a master meter located to the east of Chozen Hall. This meter distributes gas underground throughout the campus. Natural gas is available to the majority of campus buildings, through approximately 1.75 miles of pipe and is controlled by a regulator and valve assembly located on the exterior of the building.

Pipelines carrying natural gas are the most common method of transporting gas from one location to another. Pipelines may be made of either steel or plastic pipe. Every producer and distributor of natural gas must strictly adhere to DOT standards of design, construction, maintenance, testing and operation. Pipeline safety is the number one concern of these distributors. Their strict adherence to safety protocols has made natural gas one of the cheapest, most dependable and safest forms of energy.

Although the overall safety record of natural gas pipelines is exemplary, leaks do occur. One of the most common reasons for gas leaks is damage to the pipe from digging. It is the public's responsibility to help prevent damage to natural gas pipelines. The state of Louisiana has instituted the Louisiana One Call System. LAOneCall requires any contractor or private individual who will be excavating to contact them at 811 or 800-272-3020 a minimum of three days prior to digging. OneCall will contact everyone within the area who may have underground utilities. They will then be required to locate and mark these utilities in the excavation area.

Natural gas leaks can usually be discovered by one of three ways:

1. Sight - Look for signs of a possible gas leak
  - a. Patches of dead grass or vegetation
  - b. Dirt blowing out from a hole or depression in the ground
  - c. Bubbles of gas escaping from a pool of standing water
  - d. An unusual amount of dead or dying insects at or near ground level
  - e. Flames emitted from a hole in the soil
  - f. Unusual changes to soil – blackening, mildew, etc.
  - g. Extensive corrosion around pipes, meters
2. Sound - Listen for signs of possible gas leaks
  - a. Hear a roaring or loud blowing signs (usually indicates rupture of high pressure line). This could also simply be the sound of gas flowing through the piping system
  - b. Hissing or whistling from ground, building foundations, pipes, gas meters, etc.
3. Smell – A distinct smell of rotten eggs
  - a. Natural gas is lighter than air and the gas concentration as well as the smell may dissipate if the leak is in an open area

**If you SEE, HEAR, OR SMELL natural gas, there are several “Do’s and Don’ts” to be observed:**

**DO NOT:**

- Turn on or off any lights or electrical appliances
- Light any type of flame – matches, candles, etc.
- Use a phone – landline line or cell – inside or near the affected area
- Use a flashlight or lighter
- Pull any plugs from outlets
- Start an automobile, motorcycle, etc.
- Use an elevator or escalator
- Open as many doors and windows as is safely possible on your escape route but **DO NOT** waste time if doors and windows are not in your direct escape route

**DO:**

- Extinguish any cigarettes, candles or any other open flames
- Evacuate the building as quickly as possible
- Call out to others who may also be in the building or area
- Move to an area away from the suspected leak
- Call McNeese Police – 5711 from a campus phone; (337)-475-5711 from a cell phone; give them your name, your location, the area of the suspected leak and if others may still be in the building or area. Police will contact fire dept., CenterPoint Energy, ambulances, and maintenance department who may be able to shut gas valves at building entry point
- Do not allow anyone back into the building or area
- Stay at a safe distance from the suspected leak but do not leave the area. Provide assistance and information to first responders as they arrive

**EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST:**

- ❖ McNeese Police 337-475-5711
- ❖ Lake Charles Fire Department 337-491-1360
- ❖ Center Point Energy 800-477-0177
- ❖ Bob Prejean, Maintenance Manager 337-475-5885 or 337-302-5017
- ❖ Richard Rhoden Director, Facilities 337-475-5886 or 337-302-5889

***If you plan on digging anywhere on or near the campus, you must contact La One Call***



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**