

LIVING SAFELY

— with —

NATURAL GAS



LOS ALAMOS DEPT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

Si prefieres esta información de seguridad de gas natural en español,
llámenos por teléfono 505 662 8333. ¡Gracias!



Los Alamos Dept of Public Utilities
1000 Central Avenue, Suite 130
Los Alamos, New Mexico, 87544, USA
505 662 8333 CustomerCare@lacnm.us



DEAR NATURAL GAS CUSTOMER,

We are Los Alamos Department of Public Utilities (DPU) and we distribute natural gas to Los Alamos citizens. On average this equates to 7,600 customers utilizing natural gas to power their water heaters and stoves as well as heat their homes. Natural gas is safe, clean and efficient. However, like other forms of energy it is important to respect its potential dangers.

Accordingly, we are sending you this brochure "Living Safely with Natural Gas," to share with you some important information about natural gas and our distribution system. We hope that you find this information helpful in understanding how we are working to safely meet your needs.

If you have any questions about anything in this brochure please call us Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm at 505 662 8333 or drop us an e-mail at CustomerCare@lacnm.us. Also visit our web site at ladpu.com/dpu.



**IF YOU SMELL GAS,
CALL US IMMEDIATELY**

505 662 8333 M–F, 8AM–5PM
505 662 8222 After Hours



WHAT IS NATURAL GAS?

Natural gas is formed deep in the earth and is colorless, shapeless, and odorless in its pure form. Wells and pumps bring it to the surface where it is refined, mercaptan is added to give it a “rotten egg” smell, and finally it is piped to homes and businesses across the nation. Cheaper than electricity, natural gas is a reliable, clean and efficient form of energy. If used correctly, natural gas is safe.

Possible hazards

Possible hazards associated with an unintended release of natural gas from a pipeline include gas fumes migrating near or inside a building, natural gas fires or natural gas explosions.

Physical indications of a release

If you smell, hear or see the following, it could mean that there is an unintended release of natural gas:

- A “rotten egg” odor,
- A hissing sound,
- Flames burning above, or coming from the ground, and dead/discolored vegetation in the midst of green vegetation,
- Dirt blowing from a hole in the ground,
- A dry patch in a damp field,
- Water bubbling or blown into the air at a body of water,

- A Water bubbling or blown into the air at a body of water,
- A white vapor cloud, and/or
- An isolated frozen area on the ground.

Steps to be taken for public safety

If you suspect that there may be a natural gas leak:

- Don’t turn lights on or off,
- Don’t use any type of electronic device,
- Don’t use your home phone or cell phone to make calls from inside or near the house, building or immediate vicinity,
- Don’t light a match or anything else that could cause a spark,
- Leave the house, building and nearby area immediately,
- Evacuate upwind, and advise others to stay away,

Procedures to report an event

Call immediately to report the incident when you are a safe distance from the suspected leak.

Los Alamos Department of Public Utilities (DPU)
505 662 8333 Mon – Fri from 8 am – 5 pm
Or after hours or on holidays, call the
Los Alamos Police Department at 505 662 8222.

Wait for DPU to inform you that it is safe to return to your house, building or property.



**IF YOU SMELL GAS,
 CALL US IMMEDIATELY**

505 662 8333 M–F, 8AM–5PM
 505 662 8222 After Hours

NATURAL GAS PIPELINES

Purpose

Pipelines are used to transmit natural gas from the San Juan Basin area to Los Alamos. These pipelines are maintained by New Mexico Gas Company. When natural gas reaches Los Alamos, the DPU distributes the gas to your home, business or school.

Reliability and efficiency

Distribution pipelines maintained by the DPU are made from steel or polyethylene. This network of pipeline is an efficient method of bringing natural gas to customers.

Location

County-owned gas pipelines are located underground in the road and in utility easements up to the meter. Gas pipelines from the meter to the building and everything inside the building are customer-owned.

Delivery of natural gas, wellhead to meter

Los Alamos' natural gas comes from the San Juan Basin in northern New Mexico.

Deep underground deposits of natural gas are brought to the surface by wellhead pumps. After the gas is processed and purified, it travels along interstate transmission pipelines. Compressor stations are strategically located to maintain gas pressure. Natural gas is often stored in large underground reservoirs to help meet spikes in demand.

Eventually gas reaches the county border station, where it is metered and delivered to customers through a distribution network of local gas mains, small-diameter service lines (pipelines) and ultimately, customer meters.

Maintenance responsibility

As prescribed by federal safety standards, the DPU operates and maintains natural gas piping only up to the meter.

All pipelines from the gas meter to and throughout the building are the responsibility of the property owner to maintain. If not properly maintained, pipes may be subject to leakage and/or corrosion.

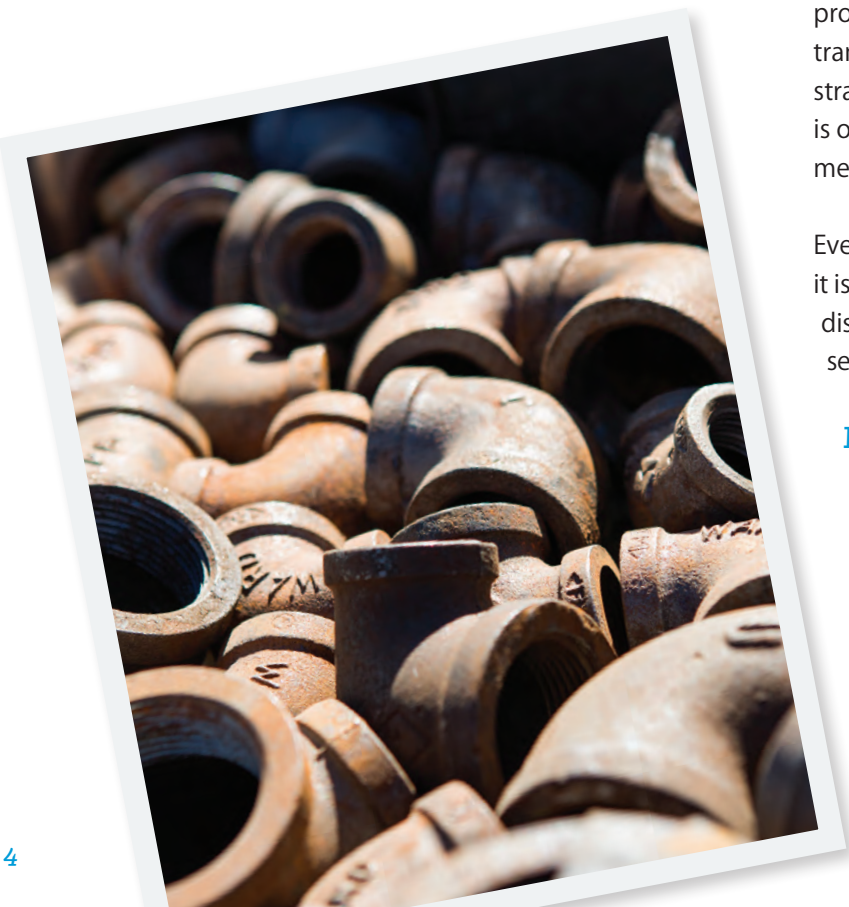
To ensure the continued safe and reliable operation of customer-owned pipes, property owners are responsible for periodically checking for leaks and possible corrosion of metallic pipes. If any unsafe condition is discovered, repairs should be made as soon as possible.

A licensed plumber or heating contractor can assist in inspecting and repairing gas pipelines. If you have any questions or are unclear on maintenance responsibilities, please call the DPU at 505 662 8333.

Undesirable Encroachments

Some gas pipelines are located in utility easements on private property. If you are planning to build a fence, an addition, a shed, or even a driveway, visit the DPU

administrative offices at 1000 Central Avenue, Suite 130. Staff will identify utility easements and location of utility lines to help you avoid hazardous situations. Call the DPU at 505 662 8333 to schedule an appointment.



**IF YOU SMELL GAS,
CALL US IMMEDIATELY**

505 662 8333 M-F, 8AM-5PM
505 662 8222 After Hours



NATURAL GAS APPLIANCES

Using natural gas appliances

When you think of a gas appliance, you might picture a pilot light and relighting it often. However, most new appliances have electronic ignitions that eliminate the need for a continuously burning pilot light — saving you energy and reducing the dangers of lighting the pilot.

As with any type of energy, the key to safety is common sense. Here are a few special rules to keep in mind with natural gas:

- Leave at least a one-inch air flow all the way around a gas appliance.
- Keep paints, papers, aerosol sprays and other flammables away from gas appliances.
- Never store or stack boxes, laundry or other material around the base of a gas appliance.
- Make sure the vent hood, pipes and flues are not blocked, cracked or corroded.
- Don't let children play on or around the gas meter or any gas appliance, and don't let them hang or swing from indoor gas pipes.
- Keep long sleeves, towels and pot holders away from open flames when using a gas range.
- Use a gas appliance only for its intended purpose. Never try to heat a room with a gas oven or range. The appliance will remove oxygen from the air causing asphyxiation.

If you're buying a new gas appliance, it's best to have it professionally installed. This ensures that all connections are secure, all vent pipes and flues are clean and undamaged, and that the appliance is adjusted properly.

Good flame or bad flame?

One quick way to tell if your natural gas appliance is adjusted properly and getting enough oxygen is to check the color of the flame on the pilot light and burner.

A pilot light should be about 90 percent blue. A yellow flame indicates the pilot is not working correctly and is giving off harmful fumes — have it checked by a professional as soon as possible.

Keep in mind that not all problems with gas appliances will have the symptom of a yellow flame. You should also look out for excessive ash or soot around a pilot light opening or air ducts, lengthy “warm-up” times, and of course strange noises or odors.

Natural gas connections

If you have an older gas appliance, especially an oven or clothes dryer, take a moment to check the connectors linking the appliance to the gas pipeline. Flexible metal connectors, especially those made of uncoated brass, can weaken or crack over time, causing a leak.



**IF YOU SMELL GAS,
CALL US IMMEDIATELY**

505 662 8333 M–F, 8AM–5PM
505 662 8222 After Hours

If your appliance has these types of connectors, have them replaced with new ones made of either stainless steel or plastic-coated metal. Look for connectors that conform to the American National Standards Institute and are certified by the American Gas Association.

It is not advisable to replace connectors yourself. This should be done by a qualified professional. If you can't tell what kind of connectors are used, or if you can't see the connectors, call your plumbing and heating dealer to inspect the appliance.

Carbon monoxide poisoning

Natural gas does not contain carbon monoxide (CO), the cause of "gas poisoning." However, when burning gas or any fuel, deadly carbon monoxide can be produced when there is incomplete combustion. This is caused when there is an insufficient oxygen supply due to damaged or worn appliances, clogged or misaligned flues, or missing flue vents.

As a basic precaution ensure that the appliance:

- Flue connections and venting are always in perfect working order — unobstructed and properly fitted,
- Vent hood, pipes, heat exchangers or flues are not cracked or corroded, and
- Is used correctly (for example, you shouldn't heat a room with a gas stove).

When humans inhale carbon monoxide, it enters the blood stream and depletes oxygen from the blood cells. If exposure continues over a long period of time, it can cause brain damage or even death. Carbon monoxide can be especially dangerous during the winter, when windows and doors are closed.

Symptoms of CO poisoning are similar to flu symptoms — so watch for these signs:

- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Dizziness or disorientation
- Muscle weakness or fatigue
- Difficulty walking.

If the flu-like symptoms are not accompanied by fever, if everyone in the family is ill, or if the symptoms disappear when you leave the house, you might have a CO problem in your home. Have your appliances checked by a professional immediately.

You can prevent CO poisoning by using your appliances correctly, keeping them well-maintained, and by installing a carbon monoxide detector near the sleeping areas of your home. Be sure to change the batteries of your CO detector regularly.

If the CO detector alarm sounds, calmly shut off appliances, evacuate everyone from the house and call the fire department at 9-1-1 from a neighbor's home or a cell phone.



**IF YOU SMELL GAS,
CALL US IMMEDIATELY**

505 662 8333 M-F, 8AM-5PM
505 662 8222 After Hours

CALL 811 BEFORE YOU DIG

New Mexico 811

Customers aren't expected to know exactly where all the underground utilities are located. However, when planning a project (small or large) for which excavation is required it is state law that the project planner request utilities be located. Knowing where the utilities are protects the excavator from injury and limits liability.

To simplify this process the DPU is a member of New Mexico

811 (NM811). NM811 provides professional damage prevention resources for excavators and homeowners statewide.

Whether you're digging a few inches or several feet, you are required to notify NM811 before you dig—it's free and it's the law!

Request a locate from NM811 at least two working days before a dig. You can call 811 from anywhere in the State of New Mexico and they will make all needed calls for you! When you call, have the following information handy:

- Your name, a contact name or NM811 member identification number;
- Type of work to be done;
- For whom the work is being done;
- Whether or not the excavation site has been pre-marked;
- Excavation site location and size;

- Driving instructions (if necessary);
- Spotting instructions;
- Any access or hazard concerns.

NM811 call center operators will notify member facility owners affected by your planned dig to "Clear" the area if no underground utilities are present, or "Mark" underground pipelines within two working days.

How to contact NM811

Mon – Fri (except holidays)

Call 811 or 1 800 321 ALERT (2537)

Fax: 1 800 727 8809

www.nm811.org

(Select the link "Submit a locate request online")

Emergency locates*:

1 866 DIG NMOC

(1 866 344 6662)

** Emergency locates are for emergency excavations that are beyond the excavator's control and affect public safety, health or welfare.*

What happens next?

Use white paint to mark your dig area. Within two working days, underground utility "spotters" will mark all underground facilities using the standard American Public Works Association's marking colors. The marks are good for 15 working days. When digging, maintain at least 18 inches of clearance from the horizontal mark and the cutting edge of the digging device.





RESPONDING TO A NATURAL GAS EMERGENCY

Who to call?

If you suspect that there is a gas leak as described on page 3... call the Department of Public Utilities immediately once you are a safe distance from the suspected leak. There is no charge to the customer for the DPU to come and investigate.

Los Alamos Department of Public Utilities (DPU)
505 662 8333 Mon – Fri from 8 am – 5 pm
Or after hours or on holidays, call the
Los Alamos Police Department at 505 662 8222.

Who responds?

Los Alamos DPU has trained crews on standby seven days a week, 24 hours a day, that are ready to respond to a gas leak. When you call our office during business hours, or the police dispatchers after hours, our standby crews are deployed immediately. Equipped with special equipment designed to detect gas, they will look for the source of the leak.

When a leak is found

If the leak is found outdoors the county responder will determine if the leak is on the county-owned facility or that of the customer. Natural gas pipelines, service lines up to the customer meter, the service regulator and meter to the outlet side are the responsibility of the county and are repaired and maintained by the Los Alamos DPU. In cases where the meter is located away from the house, the buried service line from the meter to the house is the

responsibility of the homeowner. The customer will need to contact a licensed plumber to make the necessary repair.

If the leak is found in your home, for safety reasons the county service technician will need to shut off the gas until the leak can be fixed. Gas pipelines and appliances inside the home are owned by the customer and are not maintained or repaired by the county utility. The customer will need to contact a licensed plumber to make any necessary repairs.

Do not be embarrassed if it turns out the smell is not a natural gas leak. We would rather err on the side of caution. A gas leak will not resolve itself and stop leaking; it will only become more dangerous as it gets worse. Please call if you suspect a leak inside or outside your home.

If you suspect a natural gas leak:

- Don't turn lights on or off,
- Don't use any type of electronic device,
- Don't use your home phone or cell phone to make calls from inside or near the house, building or immediate vicinity,
- Don't light a match or anything else that could cause a spark,
- Leave the house, building and nearby area immediately,
- Evacuate upwind, and advise others to stay away,
- Call the DPU immediately to report the incident when you are a safe distance from the suspected leak.



**IF YOU SMELL GAS,
 CALL US IMMEDIATELY**

505 662 8333 M–F, 8AM–5PM
505 662 8222 After Hours

LOS ALAMOS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

Safety record

The Los Alamos DPU has an excellent safety record. Working closely with industry and government agencies to stay current on new technologies and safety requirements, the Department is constantly evaluating its program for ways to improve.

Measures undertaken to prevent gas pipeline hazards

Surveys for gas leaks using highly sensitive detection equipment are conducted annually for business districts and high-pressure pipelines, and every three years for residential areas. Key valves and gas regulator stations are inspected at least annually to ensure that they work properly. Utility gas operation personnel are well-trained and certified in essential gas operation and maintenance tasks. Aging infrastructure is replaced as needed. Steel gas pipelines are protected by cathodic protection to stop or greatly reduce corrosion. The cathodic protection levels are surveyed annually and deficiencies are promptly corrected.

Emergency preparedness communication

The Los Alamos DPU includes natural gas information for its customers in utility bills, on its website at ladpu.com/dpu and in brochures/notices sent through the mail, such as this document.

Information about natural gas is sent to consumers of natural gas, emergency personnel, and public officials.

Natural gas information on New Mexico 811 is sent to contractors working in Los Alamos County.

The DPU liaises with emergency officials, police and fire departments annually. A written response plan is reviewed periodically and updated and/or amended as deemed appropriate.

Feedback from various gas stakeholders is analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the DPU's communication efforts.

Get involved

Did you know that the Los Alamos DPU is community owned? We're a public enterprise that proudly provides Los Alamos County with natural gas, water, electric and wastewater services.

It is the ratepayers that help to make decisions about their utility systems that will best suit the local needs and values. The public is encouraged to attend Utilities Board meetings and get involved.

The board meets for regular meetings every third Wednesday of each month and work sessions every first Wednesday of each month at 5:30 pm at the Municipal Building, Council Chambers at 1000 Central Avenue, Los Alamos, NM 87544. Meetings may also be held on Zoom.

Agendas and meeting minutes are posted on the County's web page: ladpu.com/BPUmeetings.

For more information visit or call us:

Los Alamos Department of Public Utilities
 1000 Central Avenue, Suite 130
 Los Alamos, NM 87544
 505 662 8333
CustomerCare@lacnm.us
ladpu.com/dpu



**IF YOU SMELL GAS,
 CALL US IMMEDIATELY**

505 662 8333 M-F, 8AM-5PM
 505 662 8222 After Hours



**IF YOU SMELL GAS,
CALL US IMMEDIATELY**

505 662 8333 M-F, 8 AM-5 PM

505 662 8222 After Hours

LOS ALAMOS

Los Alamos Dept of Public Utilities

1000 Central Avenue, Suite 130

Los Alamos, New Mexico, 87544, USA

505 662 8333 CustomerCare@lacnm.us