

# Fort Pierce Utilities

## Natural Gas Public Awareness Program

The Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 requires pipeline operators to develop and implement a public awareness program. At Fort Pierce Utilities (FPUA), our goal is to continue to provide safe, reliable natural gas service to our customers and ensure the safety of those who live and/or work near our natural gas pipelines.

### The objective of this Public Awareness Program is:

- ◆ To educate the public on how to recognize the odor of natural gas and how to respond if they detect possible gas odors. Early recognition of a gas odor and proper response can save lives and property.

- ◆ To educate the public on the symptoms and appropriate treatment of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.
- ◆ To warn the public about potential safety problems with certain flexible appliance connectors.
- ◆ To raise awareness about the presence of buried natural gas pipelines in our community.
- ◆ To help the public and excavators understand the steps that they can take to prevent damage and respond properly if they cause damage to our pipelines.
- ◆ To educate the public about how to prepare for hurricane season with regard to natural gas appliances.

## What Is Natural Gas?

Natural gas is a mixture of hydrocarbon gases, primarily methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), naturally occurring in rock formations deep below the earth's surface. The natural gas is withdrawn and transported to homes and businesses through an underground system of pipes.

### Natural Gas Safety Precautions

Natural gas is colorless, odorless, lighter than air, and non-toxic. Breathing natural gas is not harmful as long as there is an adequate supply of fresh air to breathe along with it. Natural gas by itself will not burn, but with the proper mixture of gas and air combined with an ignition source, combustion can occur.

### Why Does Natural Gas Smell So Bad?

Natural gas is safe, clean, and efficient, but it has no odor. To identify natural gas we add a harmless odorant called mercaptan, which gives natural gas its distinctive "ROTTEN EGG" smell.

### What Should I Do If I Smell Natural Gas?

The natural gas industry has an outstanding safety record, but if you smell natural gas, in the event of a gas leak inside a building:

- ◆ **Do not** turn on or off any lights or appliances.
- ◆ **Do not** use your home phone or cell phone in your house.
- ◆ **Do not** light matches.
- ◆ **Immediately** extinguish any cigarettes or open flames such as candles.
- ◆ **DO** leave the building and call FPUA from a nearby phone at 466-1600 and follow the recorded instructions, then wait for our representative to arrive.

Leaks from natural gas pipelines are extremely rare; however, it is important that you know how to recognize the signs of a leak if one were to occur in your area. A strong odor of

"ROTTEN EGGS," hissing sounds, or dirt blowing up from a hole are signs of a leak. If you suspect a leak:

- ◆ **Do not** try to fix the leak.
- ◆ **Do not** light matches, smoke, use a cell phone, or attempt to enter or start any vehicle.
- ◆ **DO** move away from and upwind of the suspected pipeline leak before calling FPUA at 466-1600. Follow the recorded instructions, then wait for our representative to arrive to investigate the situation.

**In any case, if you feel that life or property is in danger, CALL 911. FPUA has an excellent working relationship with our police and fire departments.**

## Flammable Vapors And Appliances Are A Dangerous Mix

**Natural Gas Appliances Use Pilot Flames to Start the Appliance. Do Not Store Substances with a Flammable Vapor Near a Natural Gas Appliance.**

Both gasoline and kerosene produce vapors that can catch fire causing severe burns or property damage. Vapors cannot be seen. They are heavier than air and can move along the floor a good distance from the original source by way of air currents coming from other rooms. An active pilot light on an appliance can light these vapors causing a fire.

**DO NOT** use or store flammable products such as gasoline, solvents, or adhesives in the same room or area where a water heater or any other gas appliance is installed. Keep flammable products stored in approved containers with lids tightly closed, and keep them away from children and appliances.

Keep paper, curtains, paints, solvents, etc. away from gas appliances. They can be a fire hazard.

## Why Be Concerned About Carbon Monoxide?

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is an odorless, tasteless, invisible gas that can be formed when fuels like charcoal, coal, gasoline, kerosene, natural gas, propane, or wood are burned with a insufficient supply of air.

A natural gas appliance could produce carbon monoxide if:

- ◆ Boxes, laundry, or other materials are blocking the base, restricting air flow.
- ◆ The vent hood, pipes, or flues are blocked or corroded.
- ◆ The unit is installed or adjusted improperly.
- ◆ It's used incorrectly (i.e., heating a room with a gas stove or using a gas or charcoal grill indoors).
- ◆ The heat exchanger is cracked.

Call FPUA for natural gas appliance inspections. Natural gas furnaces and heating products such as fireplace logs and space heaters should be inspected every year. Other appliances, such as heaters, clothes dryers, ranges, and cooktops should be checked for proper operation.

All natural gas appliances come with a manual. Always

read the manual for proper installation, cautions, and warnings or have your service technician review it with you.

### What Is Carbon Monoxide Poisoning?

The early effects of Carbon Monoxide poisoning mimic the flu, so watch out for these warning signs:

- ◆ Headache
- ◆ Nausea or vomiting
- ◆ Dizziness and disorientation
- ◆ Muscle weakness or fatigue

If the flu-like symptoms are NOT accompanied by fever, or if everyone in the family is ill, or if the symptoms disappear when you leave the house, you may have a CO problem. If CO symptoms are present, leave the building immediately and call FPUA at **466-1600, extension 3900**, and we will send a trained technician to test for CO. **Prevention** is the only way to deal with carbon monoxide, and the best prevention is regular inspection by a trained service technician.

## Natural Gas Appliance Flexible Connectors

A flex connector is the corrugated metal tubing used to bring gas from supply pipes to your appliance. Uncoated, brass connectors are dangerous and can cause a serious gas leak. Replace them immediately with a stainless connector or

plastic coated brass connector.

A certified professional or FPUA should inspect and change your flex connectors. For an appointment call FPUA at 466-1600, extension 3900, or ask for Customer Service.

## Our Service Territory

Fort Pierce Utilities has over 161 miles of gas main and over 88 miles of gas service lines servicing Fort Pierce, except for Hutchinson Island, and also parts of Saint Lucie County.

The four boundaries of our System are:

North on U.S. 1 to Ridgecrest Mobile Home Park,  
South to Beach Court in Port St. Lucie,

East to Indian River Drive, and  
West to Rock Road.

Natural gas is delivered to two gate stations from a high-pressure transmission line located just west of the Florida Turnpike. Our North Gate Station is located at Angle Road near 35th Street and our South Gate Station is located at 6000 Glades Cut-Off Road.

## CALL BEFORE YOU DIG: *It's not just another catchy slogan, it's the LAW.*

Today, more and more utility companies that supply your home with electrical power, natural and propane gas, water, sewer, telephone, and cable television service are delivering those services underground. It's also possible that these buried service lines are close to the surface, making digging a dangerous and expensive proposition.

Fortunately, you can find out where utility owned lines are buried on your property with one **FREE** call to Sunshine State One Call at **811**. When you make that one call, Sunshine State One Call will notify our member companies of your project and will, in turn, tell you where the buried lines they

own are located.

Florida law requires that you wait two full business days before beginning your project. This law also applies to contactors, excavators, or anyone who is digging on private or public property.

The majority of utility accidents are caused by hitting underground utility lines. For additional information call Sunshine State One Call at **811** or visit their web site at [www.callsunshine.com](http://www.callsunshine.com).

## ***Dig Safely!***

## Preparing For Hurricane Season

After being hit by three hurricanes, FPUA is very fortunate that we have had no incidences on our natural gas system. This is not to say we need to let our guard down, because gas systems in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and the Florida Panhandle had massive damage.

### ***Before Storm Season Begins***

#### **What About Natural Gas Generators?**

Natural gas-powered electrical generators can provide emergency electrical power for as long as the electricity is out. Generators are available in a variety of sizes that can replace a small portion of your electrical requirements, such as lights and refrigerator, up to all of your electrical requirements. For additional information call 466-1600, extension 4308.

#### **When A Hurricane Threatens**

- ◆ Leave the gas on. Because most gas facilities are located underground, rarely does a hurricane threaten natural gas service.
- ◆ Move or secure items not firmly installed.
- ◆ Check your yard for loose items. This includes grills, patio furniture, swings, pool equipment, and supplies. If it is not firmly secured, secure it or move it to a secure area.
- ◆ Any grill needs to be moved inside or securely tied down. This includes the grill lid. If the grill is propane (LP), remove the propane tank and securely tie it down outside. Propane tanks should never be stored inside and grills should never be operated indoors.

#### **If You Live In A Mobile Home Park**

Prior to a hurricane affecting Fort Pierce, the gas supply to five mobile home parks will be shut down. The rest of our gas system remains under pressure. Those mobile home parks are Tanglewood, Windsong, Tangelo Village, Plantation Manor, and Ridgecrest.

Trained gas system personnel will disconnect service to necessary areas, such as mobile home parks.

#### **If Asked To Evacuate**

Leave the gas on. Turning off the gas could result in unnecessary delays in restoring your gas service. By leaving your gas on, you will be able to cook, and as long as there is a reliable supply of water, you will have hot water.

### ***After A Hurricane***

Clean-up efforts after previous hurricanes show that more gas lines are broken during clean-up than during the actual storm. Before removing fallen trees it is **very important** to call Sunshine State One Call at **811** for your **FREE** utility line locate.

#### **Ranges**

Gas ranges with pilot lights require no additional care. Cook as usual. When the power is out, surface top burners with electric ignition can be easily lit. Refer to your owner's manual.

#### **Clothes Dryers**

If the power is out, you will not be able to operate your dryer, because dryers need electricity to operate.

#### **If You Smell Gas**

Follow the instructions in the "Natural Gas Safety Precautions" section on the other side.

After the storm has passed and as soon as it is safe to travel, all commercial establishments and institutions will be inspected for damage. If damage occurred, the gas meters will be locked off. The mobile home parks will not be reconnected until habitable. The process of inspecting the mobile homes will take some time.

**Fort Pierce Utilities Authority**  
**206 S. 6th Street**  
**Fort Pierce, FL 34950**  
**[www.fpu.com](http://www.fpu.com)**



**If you have any additional questions, please call (772) 466-1600 extensions 4700 or 4308.**