

Ameren Illinois
1.800.755.5000
Ameren.com/Safety

TTY Illinois Relay
711
Itactty.org

JULIE
 Underground Locating
811
Illinois1Call.com



NATURAL GAS SAFETY

Know the hazards and share these tips to stay safe.

ONE CALL MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE A breeze was blowing that crisp December morning as Sarah Skinner returned home from an early morning workout at the gym. As she stepped out of her car, she caught a whiff of rotten eggs, the telltale sign of a natural gas leak. Thanks to her dad, Sarah knew exactly what to do.

“I knew I should call Ameren just to be safe,” says Sarah, whose father, Chris Schildroth, has worked in the Ameren Illinois Natural Gas Department for years. “My dad always taught us that if you smell gas, you need to call the gas company and they’ll be out to check right away, no problem at all.”

Quickly, Sarah called Ameren and described the smell.

Soon after Sarah made the call, an Ameren gas crew arrived in her neighborhood to investigate. It turns out Sarah’s concerns were well-founded. The crew discovered two gas leaks across the street and quickly made the necessary repairs.

“The wind was blowing our way, so that’s why I could smell it,” says Sarah,



who posted on her subdivision’s Facebook page to explain why crews were digging in the neighborhood. “Everyone was thankful we noticed the smell and called about the leak. It could’ve led to an explosion or other harmful event if it wasn’t caught, so I was glad I called it in.”



SMELL GAS? ACT FAST!

An unmistakable rotten egg smell is the most common sign of a natural gas leak. But a hissing or roaring sound or an unusual area of dead vegetation, blowing dirt or bubbling water could also be signs of a gas leak.

If you notice any of these signs, leave the premises immediately, taking pets with you. Then call Ameren Illinois at **1.800.755.5000** to report the leak. You can remain anonymous.

Safety is our top priority. We respond immediately — any time of the day or night — to investigate possible gas leaks. There is never a charge for this service.



CALL OR CLICK BEFORE YOU DIG

With one quick call or click to JULIE (Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators) at 811 or Illinois1Call.com, the Illinois One Call System will make sure that all buried utility-owned lines are marked so you can dig safely. If you dig without calling, you could injure yourself or others or disrupt utility service to an entire neighborhood. You may even have to pay fines and repair costs. Whether you're planting a tree or setting a post, call or click at least 48 hours before any digging project. The service is free, and it's the law.



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

PIPING, FITTINGS AND CONNECTIONS HAZARDS

Be on the lookout for potential safety hazards that could put you in danger and potentially cause a gas leak, fire or explosion. Inspect your piping, fittings and connections, and be aware of the potential hazards noted below.

Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing (CSST) – CSST is a flexible stainless steel pipe used to supply natural gas throughout a home or building and is often coated with yellow or black exterior plastic. CSST must be properly bonded to reduce the risk of gas leaks or fire should lightning strike nearby. A licensed electrician can determine if you have CSST and ensure it is properly bonded and grounded.

Flared Gas Fittings – Copper tubing has been used for natural gas service in homes for years, but over time it can weaken due to corrosion. Breaks or cracks usually occur at “flared” connections between natural gas appliances and house piping. These fittings should be periodically inspected and corrected if there are any visible signs of damage.

Flexible Gas Connectors – These are the shorter corrugated metal tubes that connect the moveable gas appliances to your home or building's gas supply line. Some older, uncoated brass versions have a serious flaw in how their tubing was joined to their end pieces and must be replaced by a qualified professional with a stainless steel connector as shown on the right.



Unplugged Gas Lines – If you have gas lines that are no longer in use, be sure to install a plug sized for the pipe above the valve. Turning off the valve is not enough because it could be accidentally bumped and release gas even if it's slightly opened.



DON'T CREATE A FIRE HAZARD To keep your home and family safe, never use or store flammable materials near a natural gas fireplace, appliance or wall heater — or anywhere they could be exposed to an open flame. Alcohol, aerosol cans, gasoline, hand sanitizer or nail polish are just a few examples of flammable items commonly stored in homes. For added protection, make sure the combustion door on your water heater (the metal covering that provides access to the flame) is in good condition.

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EXCESS FLOW VALVES are an additional safety feature designed to shut off the flow of natural gas if a gas service line is damaged. You can request to have an excess flow valve installed in the natural gas line that serves your home or small business. The cost generally ranges from \$800 to \$1,500. The work typically takes no more than one day, but the restoration of the work site may take longer. Not every natural gas line can accommodate an excess flow valve. For additional information, please call Ameren Illinois and ask to speak with Construction Services.

PIPELINE SAFETY IS A DAILY FOCUS

Part of a vast national network, our pipeline system includes about 18,000 miles of pipeline and 12 underground gas storage fields. To keep our system safe, we monitor equipment around the clock and perform regular maintenance. If an incident or leak is detected or reported, we respond within the hour — any time of the day or night.

Most pipelines are buried underground. High-visibility markers identify the approximate location of major pipelines in the area and highlight the need for extra care. Visit the National Pipeline Mapping System at npms.phmsa.dot.gov for more information about pipelines operating in your area.



FLOODING CAN CREATE ENERGY HAZARDS

If an electrical or natural gas appliance has been in contact with water, have a professional inspect it before you attempt to use it. If at any point your meter was submerged in water, call Ameren Illinois to check it before using your appliances.

Floodwaters could shift your home or create other conditions that could cause a natural gas leak. If you detect the odor of natural gas, immediately leave your home or business and call Ameren Illinois. On your way out of the building, don't use light switches, cell phones or any electric device that could generate a spark.

At the customer's request, we will turn off electric and natural gas service when floodwaters are rising. We will return to restore your service when it is safe to do so.

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TOO HOT TO HANDLE If you're not careful, everyday activities like cooking and bathing can lead to serious scalding burns.

To protect yourself and loved ones, lower your water heater temperature to 120° F (the "low" setting) — or less. The American Burn Association cautions that 120° F is an upper limit for safety and is still potentially dangerous to many people.

CUSTOMER-OWNED GAS LINES Ameren Illinois owns and maintains the natural gas pipelines that run to your gas meter. However, some customers also have buried gas piping to outdoor gas-burning appliances, such as a heater for a pool or detached garage, a permanently installed gas grill, or a natural gas light. You may also have buried piping if the gas fuel line from your meter goes underground before entering a basement or crawl space.

This piping belongs to the property owner. Ameren Illinois does not maintain it and JULIE does not locate it. If you have buried gas piping, have a qualified plumbing or heating professional inspect it periodically for leaks and make any necessary repairs.

CAN YOU BUILD IT? Utility pipelines are often located on private property. Easements are right-of-way agreements that allow Ameren Illinois to legally access private property to inspect, repair and replace natural gas pipelines and electric lines that may be buried there.

Easements and rights of way must be taken into account before building a permanent structure, such as a deck or garage, on your property. Otherwise, the new building could hinder our ability to safely access important utility equipment. Before construction begins, ask your contractor to check for any utility easements affecting your property.



KEEP GAS METERS CLEAR

Air needs to circulate freely around the equipment that brings natural gas into your home or business for it to operate properly. In the winter, if snow has accumulated on the meter, use a broom to gently sweep it off. Don't hit or shake the meter or use tools with sharp edges. Also, be sure to keep furnace and water heater vents clear of snow and ice too.

CARBON MONOXIDE: THE SILENT KILLER Carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning can occur when fossil fuels are burned without proper ventilation – and the results can be deadly. Potential sources of CO include vehicles, gas appliances, chimneys, charcoal grills and portable kerosene heaters.

If anyone in your home is feeling ill with flu-like symptoms and you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, vacate the premises and call **911**.

To keep your home safe, install CO detectors (as required by state law) and have a qualified professional inspect your natural gas appliances regularly.

What steps can I take to avoid CO in my home?

- Install carbon monoxide detectors.
- Before winter, have your heating system and natural gas fireplaces checked by a qualified professional.
- Make sure appliance vents and exhaust ducts are not blocked, are in good condition and are properly connected to exhaust the combustion gases outside.
- Use a mirror to make sure your chimney/flue is not blocked.
- Never operate a gas-powered engine in an enclosed space, such as a garage.