

## PUBLIC AWARENESS

### AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE ABOUT GAS PIPELINE SAFETY

#### Pipeline Purpose and Reliability

The U. S. relies on natural gas for nearly ¼ of its energy. Natural gas is clean, convenient, and efficient, which makes it the country's most popular home heating fuel. Each day, underground pipelines carry natural gas safely and efficiently to millions of homes and businesses across the U.S. Natural gas is used to heat homes, businesses, water, cook meals, for many industrial processes, and as fuels for vehicles and electric power generation. In our community, underground pipelines provide natural gas service to Watertown Municipal Utilities. Watertown Municipal Utilities operate a safe and efficient pipeline distribution network of mains, services, and meters. Natural gas is purchased from BP Canada Energy Marketing at the city's gate station. It is then distributed through main and service lines to your gas meter and into your home or business.

The pipeline transportation system in the U.S. is one of the safest and most efficient means of transporting energy products. The National Transportation Safety board has found that pipelines provide the highest level of public safety as compared to other transportation modes. Pipelines have fewer accidents causing personal injury than any other form of transportation, such as trucks, railroads, ships, and airplanes. In addition, pipeline operators are extensively regulated by Federal and State regulations with regard to design, construction, operation, and maintenance.

Safety is the number-one priority of the natural gas industry. At Watertown Municipal Utilities our main goal is to deliver natural gas reliably and safely to you, our customer. In doing so, we want you to know what to do if you ever smell gas or if a natural gas pipeline emergency occurs where you live or work.

#### Right-Of-Way (ROW) Encroachment Prevention

Pipeline right-of-ways enable workers to gain access for inspection, maintenance, testing or emergencies. Pipeline right-of-ways must be kept free from structures and other obstructions. If a pipeline crosses your property, please do not plant trees or high shrubs on the ROW. Also, do not dig, store, or place anything on or near the ROW without first having Watertown Municipal Utilities personnel mark the pipeline, stake the ROW, and explain the utility construction guidelines to you.

#### Pipeline Location Information

Pipeline markers – natural gas pipelines will sometimes be marked with signs. Since pipelines are buried underground, the markers are used to indicate the pipeline's approximate location. The signs generally will be located at major roadway and railroad crossings and at intervals along major roadways. Information on the sign includes the telephone number for reporting pipeline emergencies to the appropriate agency/company.

Are pipeline markers and signs always placed on top of the pipeline? Not always. Markers indicate the general location of the pipeline. They cannot be relied upon to indicate the exact location of the pipeline they mark, the depth of the pipeline, or the number of pipelines in the vicinity.

Example of a natural gas pipeline marker.



#### CUSTOMER OWNED PIPING

As a customer, the portion of buried piping that you own, in most cases, is that segment of the gas line on your side of the gas meter. Many customers do not own any buried gas piping. Some examples of customer owned gas piping are:

- Piping to a barbecue grill
- Piping to a gas yard light
- Piping to a detached garage
- Piping to a swimming pool heater

Watertown Municipal Utilities complies with the United States Department of Transportation order that requires us to notify customers who may own buried natural gas piping not maintained by Watertown Municipal Utilities. You, as customers, are responsible for maintaining that specific piping. "Maintain" means to monitor buried piping for corrosion and leakage. If corrosion or leaks are found, shut off the flow of gas.

Customers should have a qualified, professional plumber or heating contractor assist you with locating and inspecting your buried gas piping. Customer buried piping, not owned by Watertown Municipal Utilities, should be replaced if any leaks or unsafe conditions are discovered.

For further information:  
Watertown Municipal Utilities  
605-882-6233  
901 Fourth Avenue SW  
Watertown, SD 57201



## LIVING SAFELY WITH NATURAL GAS



## WATERTOWN MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

**901 Fourth Avenue SW  
Watertown, SD 57201  
Phone (605) 882-6233**

# IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY, CALL 911 AND WATERTOWN MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

## Hazard Awareness and Prevention Measures

Like all forms of energy, natural gas must be handled properly. A gas leak caused by damage to a pipeline may pose a hazard and has the potential to ignite. Watertown Municipal Utilities work diligently to ensure pipeline safety through a variety of measures including:

- Coordination with SD One Call. Call the toll-free number 811 or 1-800-781-7474.
- Inspection programs and workforce qualifications.
- Design and construction practices.
- SD Public Utility Commission oversight

Watertown Municipal Utilities maintains an on-going relationship with local emergency response officials, in order to prepare for and respond to any pipeline emergency. In an emergency call 911.

Facts and potential hazards of natural gas:

- Pipelines carry gaseous material under high pressure.
- Natural gas is colorless and lighter than air.
- Natural gas is flammable.
- Any pipeline leak can be potentially hazardous.

## Leak Recognition and Response

**A gas leak is usually recognized by smell, sight, or sound:**

**SIGHT** Look for dirt being blown into the air, mist, fog, bubbling in standing water, fire coming from the ground, or dead or dying vegetation.

**SOUND** Listen for any unusual noise like a roaring, blowing, hissing, or whistling.

**SMELL** Notice any unusual odor. Natural gas is odorless. An odorant is added to natural gas to give it a noticeable odor. The chemical gives the gas a “rotten egg smell.”

**What you should do if you suspect a leak:**

**MOVE** to a safe location immediately.

**CALL Watertown Municipal Utilities** immediately at **605-882-6233**. In the event of a fire or explosion, call 911. Do not assume someone else will report the condition. Give them your name, phone number, and a description of the leak and its location.

**DO NOT** use telephones, strike a match, operate engines and motors, switch lights or appliances on or off, or even turn on a flashlight in the area you smell gas. These items can produce sparks that might ignite the gas and cause a fire or explosion.

## Damage Prevention

The greatest risk to underground natural gas pipelines is the accidental damage during excavation. Even minor damage such as a dent, scrape, crease, or gouge to a pipeline may cause a leak or failure. **Call before you dig!** It's the law.

Notify South Dakota One Call at 1-800-781-7474 or dial 811. It's a free call and free service. The SD One Call will let us know who you are and where you intend to dig. The law requires that all persons planning excavations to give two days notice (excluding weekends and holidays) of their intent to excavate any area, including public and private property, where underground utilities may exist.









We ask for your cooperation and participation in this program to help prevent damage to underground utilities and to promote public safety.



## REMEMBER TO “DIG SAFELY”:

- Call SD One Call at 1-800-781-7474 or dial 811 two days before digging
- Wait for the site to be marked
- Respect the marks
- Dig with care
- Excavation within 18 inches of markings shall only be with hand tools

## COLOR CODE FOR MARKING UNDERGROUND UTILITY LINES

	<b>ELECTRIC</b>
	<b>GAS-OIL-STEAM</b>
	<b>COMMUNICATION CATV</b>
	<b>POTABLE WATER</b>
	<b>IRRIGATION, RECLAIMED WATER, SLURRY LINES</b>
	<b>SEWER</b>
	<b>TEMPORARY SURVEY MARKINGS</b>
	<b>PROPOSED EXCAVATION</b>

## Emergency Preparedness & Priority to Protect Life

Watertown Municipal Utilities is committed to public safety and environmental protection. If you are a public or emergency official, you know to take whatever steps you deem necessary to safeguard the public in the event of a pipeline emergency. The following suggestions are offered as a guide:

- Secure the area around the leak to a safe distance. This could include evacuations of nearby homes and businesses as well as barricades to control site access.
- If the pipeline leak is not burning, take steps to prevent ignition. Prohibit smoking, re-route traffic and shut off electricity.
- If the pipeline leak is burning, try to prevent the spread of fire but do not attempt to extinguish it. Gas vapors could explode when reignited by secondary fires.

## Emergency Response Plans

Watertown Municipal Utilities work together with emergency responders, and state and local agencies to prevent and prepare for emergencies. We maintain up-to-date operations and maintenance procedures as well as emergency response procedures which are made available to local and state authorities.

## Security

The Watertown Municipal Utilities gate station is fenced and remains locked at all times. Watertown Municipal Utilities also performs routine patrols of pipeline right-of-ways to maintain safe operations of the pipeline.

## Facility Purpose

The Watertown Municipal Utilities gate station provides a natural gas point-of-entry from our transmission pipeline suppliers. An odorant is added to the natural gas for safety and leak detection. Please report any suspicious activities to Watertown Municipal Utilities at **605-882-6233** immediately.

## Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless gas that can accumulate within buildings from vehicles left running or blocked vent lines from heating or cooking appliances such as furnaces and barbecue grills.

**Caution:** Certain older gas connectors used to connect gas appliances in your home may be dangerous. Some older brass connectors have a flaw in how their tubing was joined and can come apart, causing unsafe conditions. Any uncoated brass connector should be replaced immediately. Watertown Municipal Utilities recommends that only a qualified heating dealer or plumbing contractor check or replace your connectors.