

Excavator Damage Prevention

Pipeline Purpose and Reliability

PSNC Energy operates more than 10,000 miles of natural gas pipelines spread across 28 counties in the North Central, Piedmont and Western areas of North Carolina. These pipelines carry natural gas to more than 460,000 customers.

According to federal statistics, pipelines are the safest and most environmentally friendly form of energy transportation in use today. There is, however, the possibility of accidental contact during excavating, boring or other construction activity.

Facts About Natural Gas

Natural gas is odorless, colorless and tasteless. To aid in leak detection, natural gas is odorized with a harmless additive to give it a pungent odor similar to that of rotten eggs or sulfur. This distinct odor is designed to alert people to the presence of natural gas before it accumulates in potentially dangerous concentrations.

Natural gas is nontoxic and lighter than air. When it's open to the atmosphere, natural gas will rise and dissipate quickly, but, when released within a confined space, it can accumulate, displace the oxygen and lead to suffocation.

Natural gas is flammable. When mixed with the proper amount of air and exposed to an ignition source, it will burn. This characteristic makes natural gas a valuable source of energy; however, it's also what makes it dangerous if not handled properly.

Hazard Awareness and Prevention Measures

PSNC Energy's highest priority is the safe and reliable delivery of natural gas to customers. Therefore, we rigorously test and inspect our pipelines and provide regular safety communications to the public. These efforts are standard practices and integral to the integrity of our pipelines and the safety of the people who live and work around them.

Coordination, communication and cooperation between excavators and utility owners can reduce the risk of damage to utility facilities. When an excavator calls the North Carolina One Call Center for underground utility locates at least two working days in advance of digging, this is the first important step to ensure the safety of the public and the safety of the excavator's crew.

Look for Signs of Underground Pipelines

Natural gas pipelines are often identified by markers placed at intervals along pipeline rights of way. Markers warn that a pipeline is located in the area, identify the product transported in the line and provide the name of the pipeline operator and a telephone number to call in the event of an emergency.

While the markers are very helpful to indicate the presence of pipelines in the area, they don't show the exact location, depth or how many pipelines are in the right of way. Also, be aware that pipelines may not follow a straight line between markers. Please keep in mind that not all pipelines are marked. The absence of a pipeline marker does not mean that an underground pipeline may not be present.

Excavator Damage Prevention Guidelines

Please post this important information.

1. Call Before You Dig

State law requires excavators to call the North Carolina One Call Center (NC One Call) at **811** or **1-800-632-4949** at least two working days (excluding weekends and holidays) before beginning any excavation work. At no charge, NC One Call will notify all member utilities, including PSNC Energy. Upon notification, PSNC Energy will dispatch a representative to locate and mark company-owned underground natural gas facilities.

When an excavator's locate request is received by NC One Call, utilities have two working days from 12:01 am of the next business day to mark their underground facilities. For example, if you want to dig on Thursday, you should submit your locate request to NC One Call on Monday.

Locate markings are valid for 15 business days starting on the day you call in the locate request. You should call NC One Call on the 13th business day to request a new locate if you are not sure that your work will be complete by the end of the 15th business day. In the event the markings are destroyed before completion of your work, you should call NC One Call to request a new locate.

Remember, calling before you dig doesn't cost a thing, but not calling could result in property damage or serious injury. So make the call, and remember these four simple steps:

- Call NC One Call at 811.
- Wait for the site to be marked.
- Respect and maintain the marks.
- Dig with care.



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

2. "Give Us a Hand" Around the Buried Facilities

Before you can safely cross or work in close proximity to an underground utility, you must first verify its depth. Flags and locator marks tell you the direction the utility is running, but not how deep it is buried. Use proper hand digging tools and techniques to safely verify the depth of any buried utilities in close proximity to your planned excavation. The only way to be sure of utility depth is to physically expose it.

When working within the utility marking tolerance zone, use hand digging or vacuum excavation techniques to spot and expose pipelines and other underground utilities. In North Carolina, the tolerance zone is 30 inches on either side of the utility locate marks. Excavators are responsible for finding and avoiding all facilities down to the depth they are working.

3. Protect Exposed Facilities

Notify PSNC Energy whenever gas facilities are exposed. Adequate support must be provided for our facilities including, but not limited to, shoring, temporary bridging, suspension supports, and proper backfilling under and around facilities. PSNC Energy can suggest methods for the design of support facilities.

4. Blasting

Whenever blasting may be necessary, make sure PSNC Energy is aware so special precautions can be taken. Explosive detonations near our pipelines are not permissible without an engineering analysis and written approval from PSNC Energy. If approved, PSNC Energy representatives may be required on site to monitor blasting activities and perform surveys for leaks before and after the blast.



5. Damaged Facilities

Notify us immediately at **1-877-776-2427** if you make contact with a PSNC Energy pipeline — no matter how minor the damage is. The damage at the point of contact may appear slight or unnoticeable, but may have placed stress on the pipeline, damaged protective coatings or caused damage elsewhere in the facility. Do not try to fix or repair the damage. Do not cover it or hide it.

As soon as we're notified, a PSNC Energy representative will be dispatched to inspect the damage and make or arrange for any repair(s) that may be necessary.

6. Know the Warning Signs for Gas Leaks

- Dirt blowing from the ground into the air.
- Continuous bubbling or water being blown into the air at a lake, river or any wet area over or near a pipeline.
- Fire coming from the ground or an explosion near a pipeline.
- Dead or discolored vegetation in an area of otherwise healthy vegetation.
- Unusual noises coming from your gas equipment.
- A hissing, whistling or roaring sound along or near a pipeline.
- A pungent odor similar to that of rotten eggs or sulfur.

7. Leak Response

- Eliminate any source of ignition from the area. Do not turn on a light switch, light a match, start or stop an engine, use any type of phone or operate anything that may create a spark.
- Leave the area immediately and move to a safe location upwind of the leak.
- Warn others to stay away.
- Call PSNC Energy at **1-877-776-2427** and **911** from a safe location.
- Do not attempt to repair a leak.
- Do not attempt to operate pipeline valves.
- Do not attempt to extinguish a natural gas fire.

How Can You Learn More?

To learn more about natural gas safety or damage prevention, please visit the following Web sites:

PSNC Energy Safety Information: www.psnenergy.com/gassafety
Pipeline Safety Information: <http://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/>
North Carolina One Call Center: www.ncocc.org
Underground Damage Prevention: www.digsafely.com



www.psnenergy.com/gassafety