

# NATURAL GAS SAFETY

## NATURAL GAS

### What is it?

Natural gas is a naturally-occurring hydrocarbon, composed mostly of methane. It can heat water for your bath, run your furnace and cook your food. And like all forms of energy, it's important to stay safe around it and know what to do in case of emergency.

### Smell Rotten Eggs? ACT FAST: GO OUTSIDE.

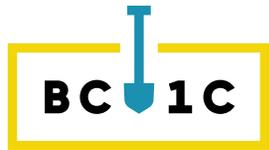
Before natural gas is piped to your house, a chemical called mercaptan is added to make it smell like sulphur or rotten eggs. **If you suddenly smell rotten eggs or hear the hissing sound of escaping gas, it could be a natural gas leak.**

- 1. Stop what you're doing.** Don't use your cellphone or landline, don't smoke, light matches or operate electrical switches or create any other source of ignition.
- 2. Go outside.** As you exit, leave the door open behind you as well as any windows that may already be open.
- 3. Report it.** Once outside, **CALL 911** or your local emergency number, and your gas service provider's 24-hour emergency line:  
FortisBC: **1 800 663-9911**  
Pacific Northern Gas: **1 800 663-1173**
- 4. Stay outside,** until an official says it's safe to go back in.



Office of the  
Fire Commissioner  
Emergency Management BC





## Carbon Monoxide Safety

**Unlike the smell of natural gas, carbon monoxide (CO) has no smell at all. It's a by-product of burning fuel, such as natural gas.** When there isn't enough fresh air to burn completely, or if exhaust isn't vented to the outdoors, a build up of CO can result.

The risk of CO poisoning from well-maintained natural gas appliances is extremely low. You can reduce the risk even further by having a licensed gas contractor install, inspect and service your appliances as well as checking chimneys annually or according to manufacturer's instructions to make sure they are connected, clear of obstructions and in good repair. Use Technical Safety BC's online search tool to find someone near you: [technicalsafetybc.ca/find-contractor](https://technicalsafetybc.ca/find-contractor).

You should also install a CO alarm on every level of the home and in sleeping areas if your home has a fuel-burning appliance/heater, fireplace or attached garage.



## Natural Gas Meter Safety Tips

### Keep your natural gas meter clear in winter:

- ❖ Remove any built-up snow by hand until the regulator and shut-off valve are clear
- ❖ Never kick or hit the meter to break ice or snow build-up. If ice builds up on your meter or regulator, call your gas service provider for help
- ❖ Don't use a snowplow or blower near your meter
- ❖ Maintain a clear path to the meter—take care not to shovel snow onto it
- ❖ When clearing and shovelling snow, also ensure appliance vents on the side of your home are not blocked

### Year-round meter safety tips:

- ❖ Keep the area around the meter clear of plants, shrubbery and landscaping
- ❖ Don't tie or attach anything to your meter
- ❖ Don't store or lean anything against the meter
- ❖ If your meter is in a driveway or parking area, install protection posts to prevent vehicle damage
- ❖ Don't build structures around or over the meter and piping
- ❖ Take care not to bury the meter shut-off valve, which is on the inlet pipe next to the meter
- ❖ If you're renovating and adding windows, doors or vents to your building, ensure there is adequate distance between the opening and the gas meter
- ❖ If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your natural gas service provider

## BC 1 CALL

If you're planning to break ground, whether you're digging in the yard, building a fence or excavating a job site, **you must click or call BC 1 Call BEFORE you dig.** Even just hitting pipes with a shovel could cause a leak.

BC 1 Call provides you with the location of underground gas lines and other buried utilities in your area. It's free, fast and could help you avoid safety hazards and costly repairs.

Learn more at [bc1c.ca](https://bc1c.ca).

## Has Your Gas Been Shut Off?

**Don't try to turn it back on.** Only a licensed gas contractor can turn the gas back on safely. Find a Technical Safety BC licensed gas contractor to restore gas service at the meter at [technicalsafetybc.ca/find-contractor](https://technicalsafetybc.ca/find-contractor)

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