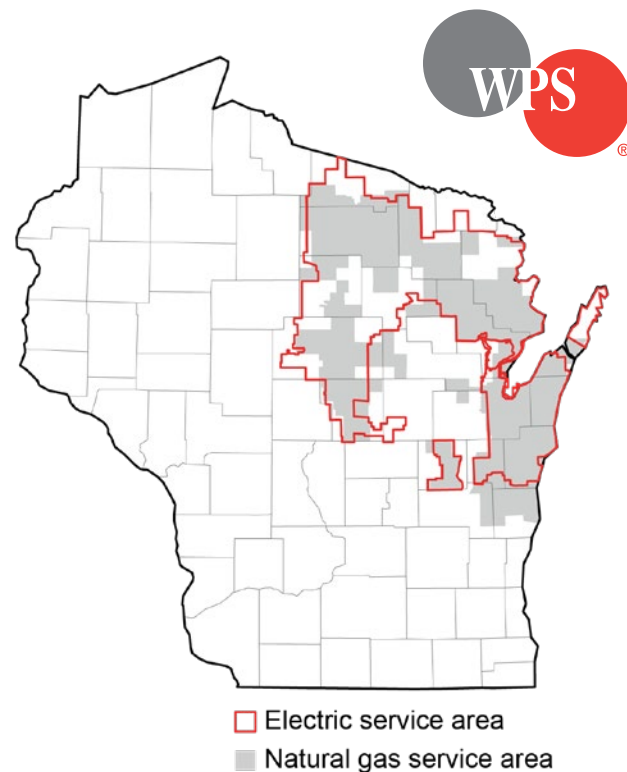


Electricity and natural gas are two of the most common hazards at an emergency scene. In the event of an emergency, our first priority is to protect human life. By working together, we can ensure that any incident is managed in a way that the public, your first responders and our crews remain safe. Use this summary as a guide to reporting and responding to a utility emergency.

## WPS SERVICE AREA



## Reporting an electric or natural gas emergency in our service area

**1.** Call our dedicated public safety agency phone line (do not distribute to the general public) as soon as you know you need assistance. This phone line will direct your call to the top of our answering queue.

**800-450-7299**

**2.** Provide specific details about the situation:

- Address or intersection closest to the emergency
- Nature of emergency: building fire, natural gas odors, natural gas leaking or blowing, etc.
- Assistance required

**3.** Provide contact information for your on-site personnel and location of incident command post.

We will dispatch our closest utility first responder who may be able to perform natural gas emergency response duties. Additional natural gas personnel will be dispatched to the scene to support first responders as needed. Response time is based on:

- Time of day
- Personnel on duty
- Other emergencies in area
- Travel time
- Weather (storms or other emergencies may extend our response time)



If you call for assistance with a carbon monoxide investigation, someone from your department must remain on site until we arrive.

## FLOOD EMERGENCY guidelines

### Use this list to guide you through emergency responses in flooded areas

#### Public safety

- **Contact us immediately at:**  
**800-450-7299**
- Secure area and remove any occupants.
- Prevent access to flooded areas.
- Identify special needs households and offer assistance.
- Provide secured access for homeowners.
- Identify any hazardous areas (downed power lines, natural gas odors, etc.).
- Do not allow occupants to return until conditions are safe.



#### Emergency responder safety

- Avoid entering basements.
- Monitor rising water and any smell of natural gas.
- Keep in contact with WPS.
- Only shut off service at the meter. Do not shut off underground valves in any case. Wait for utility personnel to arrive.
- Always assume a downed wire is energized.
- Do not enter electric substations, natural gas gate stations or any utility fenced-in areas.
- Be cautious of weakened basement structures (collapsing walls, windows, etc.) that may create a suction effect.
- Be aware of uneven ground and unseen obstacles underwater.
- Be aware of manhole covers removed by backpressure and suction into manholes as water recedes.

#### Utility shut-off procedure

Call us for utility shut-off at:  
**800-450-7299**

#### Utility restoration procedure

- We will restore service when conditions are safe.
- Flooded appliances need to be inspected by a service technician prior to restoration.

#### Key messages for the general public

- Natural gas restoration will take time. Services may be off for several days, so please be patient.
- Our primary goal is to keep everyone safe.
- All water must be removed from homes, and appliances must be inspected prior to natural gas restoration.

Program our 24-hour dedicated public safety agency phone number into your cell phone so you have it when you need it.

**800-450-7299**



WPS, in partnership with Callan and Associates, offers free online emergency first responder training. The Responding to Utility Emergencies (RTUE) program covers the dangers that first responders must recognize and handle to achieve better outcomes and to save more lives. RTUE online incorporates interactive media to engage firefighters, police officers and other emergency personnel.

For more information, visit  
[www.wisconsinpublicservice.com/responders](http://www.wisconsinpublicservice.com/responders)

*ELECTRICITY,  
NATURAL GAS*  
— AND THE —  
*FIRST  
RESPONDER*

**⚡ SUMMARY GUIDE**





# Responding to **ELECTRIC EMERGENCIES**

## **Treat all wires as energized and follow these steps when responding to an electric emergency.**

- Establish a safety zone of 25 to 30 feet around the downed line and surrounding electric equipment. Keep the public and unauthorized personnel away from electrical hazards.
- Report all downed power lines to us by calling our dedicated public safety agency phone number.
- Do not attempt to move downed power lines. Power lines can become re-energized at any time.
- Do not spray water on downed lines, transformers or other equipment.
- Do not cut into locked electrical cabinets. Cutting tools could make contact with energized equipment inside the cabinet.



Only trained electric utility employees using rated and tested personal protective equipment can determine if a power line is de-energized and safely move it.



“Test sticks” are **not** a safe method to determine if a power line is energized. All downed power lines should be considered energized until an electric utility employee verifies and grounds the line.

# Responding to **NATURAL GAS EMERGENCIES**

## **Follow these steps when responding to a possible natural gas leak or emergency:**

- Call us immediately on our dedicated public safety agency phone line.  
**800-450-7299**
- If available, use instruments to verify and locate natural gas presence.
  - » If instruments are not available and you can smell natural gas, assume an ignitable mixture is present.
- Establish a safety zone, keeping the wind at your back.
  - » Evacuate the public to a safe distance.
  - » Keep everyone out of areas where natural gas may have accumulated.
- Eliminate ignition sources.
  - » Do not smoke, ring doorbells or touch anything that might create a spark, such as electric light switches or cell phones.
  - » Turn off engines or other power equipment. Any emergency equipment that must be kept running should be moved a safe distance away.
- Ventilate the area if it can be done safely.

## **Also keep these safety precautions in mind:**

- If safe to do so, attempt to stop the flow of natural gas by closing the service meter valve.
  - » Underground valves and valves inside regulator stations or fenced areas at gate stations should only be operated by utility employees. Improper operation of these valves can cause dangerous problems elsewhere in the system.
- Do not enter an enclosed area, such as an excavation, sewer, vault or pit, where natural gas is blowing.
  - » Natural gas may displace oxygen in these areas making it difficult to breathe.
  - » Static electricity may accumulate on plastic pipe, creating an ignition hazard.
- If natural gas is escaping outside, keep water out of excavations where gas is blowing.
- Check nearby buildings and structures for migrating natural gas – but do not ring doorbells as they are potential ignition sources.
- Never open a natural gas valve that has been closed as this could create a hazardous situation. Contact utility personnel to check for potential problems on the system before re-establishing service.

## **If responding to a natural gas fire:**

- Let the fire burn unless life is in danger.
  - » Extinguishing the fire before the natural gas is shut off may result in an explosion if the accumulating natural gas is ignited.
- For structure fires, shut off natural gas supply only if you can safely access the meter. Once gas is off, remain alert for gas migration and possible reignition.
- Do not use water to suppress a natural gas fire, as it is ineffective. However, a fog spray can be used to cool combustible exposures. Consult utility personnel and the incident commander for instructions on how to proceed.



# **NATURAL GAS** – safe, reliable, efficient

Every day, millions of people rely on natural gas to heat homes and prepare meals. This safe, reliable energy source is delivered to our customers by a network of underground pipelines. We are committed to operating safe natural gas pipelines that meet local, state and federal regulations. Our integrity management programs provide a process for inspecting, assessing and maintaining natural gas pipelines, based on industry best practices. Natural gas and the pipelines that carry it have exceptional safety records. However, when not used properly or when it is uncontrolled, natural gas can be dangerous.

## **Basic natural gas properties**

Natural gas is an odorless, colorless, tasteless, nontoxic gas. It will not burn by itself, but if mixed with the right amount of air, natural gas can ignite. Natural gas is a simple asphyxiate – in an enclosed area, it may displace oxygen in the air, which can lead to suffocation. Transmission pipelines carry un-odorized natural gas. When natural gas passes through our gate stations, we add mercaptan, a rotten-egg-like odorant, to help detect leaks.

## **Signs of a natural gas leak**

Use your eyes, ears and nose, and call us if you:

- Smell an odor like rotten eggs.
- Hear an unusual hissing, whistling or roaring sound.
- See water bubbling in a puddle, river, pond or creek.
- See dirt or debris blowing into the air.
- See unexplained dead or dying grass or other vegetation near pipeline.

## **Pipeline locations**

It's important to know the location of pipelines in your community. Look for pipeline markers – often placed at public road crossings, fence lines and street intersections to indicate the presence of pipelines. Color, format and design of markers may vary, but all provide the pipeline contents, operator name and emergency phone number. The National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS) also can provide the names of pipeline operators in your area. (Visit <https://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov> to access this information). Pipeline markers are not commonly used in residential areas - look for the presence of natural gas meters on or near houses or buildings - if you see these metering devices, buried natural gas lines are nearby.

## **Train derailment**

Train derailment and/or heavy equipment used to mitigate a train derailment have been known to cause pipeline failure. In the event of train derailment, call 811 “Call Before You Dig” to determine if there is a pipeline in the vicinity of the accident, as well as the location and depth of the pipeline. Then contact the pipeline operator to inspect the facilities.



**SAFETY IS IN YOUR HANDS.  
EVERY DIG. EVERY TIME.**

## **Be prepared**

Incorporating a response procedure for a natural gas pipeline incident in your emergency preparedness plan can help prevent a serious incident. Remember to include WPS us in disaster drills. Together, we can protect communities in the event of a natural gas incident. Contact us at 800-450-7260 to arrange for drill coordination.