

project begins. This gives us time to schedule a site visit and prepare a written estimate. The relocation fee will depend on the difficulty of the installation. For more details, contact us at **703-750-1000**.

Frederick, Md., customers call **301-662-2151**.

Shenandoah, Va., customers call **540-869-1111**
or **1-800-566-7436**.

NATURAL GAS SAFETY AND CHILDREN

Washington Gas cares about the safety of your children. Teach them that hot things can hurt them. Monitor children when cooking and turn pot handles so they do not stick out over the edges of the stove top.

To avoid scalding, teach children to test the water in the tub with their finger before getting into the bath.

Teach them never to crawl into or play with a clothes dryer. Dryers are no place for family pets either.

For more child-friendly information, please visit safegasmaryland.org or safegasvirginia.org.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Washington Gas Customer Service (*translation services available*):
703-750-1000

Washington Gas **Frederick, Md.**, Office: **301-662-2151**

Washington Gas **Shenandoah, Va.**, Office:
540-869-1111 or **1-800-566-7436**

Hearing Impaired (*Voice Relay and TTY/TTD available*): **711**

If you smell natural gas: **911** or **703-750-1400**

Outside the local calling area: **1-800-752-7520**

Washington Gas Customer Information Line:
1-888-941-HEAT (941-4328)



**Washington
Gas**

washingtongas.com



RECYCLE

0910-10K-GP

Using Natural Gas SAFELY



**Washington
Gas**

A MESSAGE TO OUR CUSTOMERS

For over 160 years, Washington Gas has been a vital part of the vibrant Washington area community and economy with more than one million customers throughout the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia.

According to the American Gas Association, natural gas is the cleanest burning fossil fuel and is a highly efficient form of energy. It's economical and most natural gas used in the U.S. is produced in North America. It's easy to see why natural gas is increasingly popular for household and commercial use as well as a fuel for vehicles.

Washington Gas is committed to providing safe and reliable natural gas service. We monitor and inspect our pipelines regularly and respond around the clock to natural gas emergencies. It is our goal to aid you in using natural gas safely and efficiently while enjoying its benefits.

This brochure contains valuable information on using natural gas appliances, preventative measures during construction and renovations as well as emergency contact information. Please keep this booklet handy and use it as a guide as necessary.

Finally, we recognize that you have a choice in selecting your natural gas supplier. We would like to thank you for choosing Washington Gas.

For more information on natural gas safety, visit washingongas.com/pages/NaturalGasSafety.



ABOUT NATURAL GAS

Properties of Natural Gas

Natural gas is non-toxic, colorless, odorless and combustible. For detection and safety, Washington Gas adds an unpleasant, sulfur-like odorant called mercaptan to the majority of natural gas traveling through its pipelines. Gas traveling through a small portion of our transmission pipeline is not odorized.

Because natural gas is lighter than air, when released, it rises and mixes with the air. Outdoors, it dissipates into the atmosphere.

Natural gas burns only when it is mixed with air in certain concentrations **and ignited** — by a spark, a match or some other source of heat.

When Natural Gas Burns



Natural gas appliances are designed to mix natural gas with air at a controlled rate. The burner flames from your natural gas appliances should always be blue and steady. The bright blue color shows that the correct amounts of gas and air are combining for safe operation. Yellow or wavering flames indicate that natural gas is not burning completely and that repair or adjustments are necessary.

One exception is natural gas fireplaces, which may have a luminous yellow flame, yet still burn completely without the formation of carbon monoxide. These fireplaces have a safety device that automatically turns off the unit if the oxygen level falls below what is needed for proper combustion.

Some gas appliances have pilot lights that burn continuously. When operating, gas appliances always produce flames, even if you can't see them.

Flammable Products

Flammable vapors in the air may be drawn to a flame, ignite or even explode. Aerosol sprays—such as pesticides, hair sprays, spray cement—should never be used near an open flame. Both the propellant and the contents may be flammable.

Painting materials, cleaning solvents, gasoline cans and oily rags should never be stored near a gas appliance or in the same room. These materials may produce flammable vapors.

Indoor Air

Gas appliances and fireplaces use oxygen from the air to operate. Breathing also consumes oxygen. When a home is sealed tightly, the oxygen inside can be used up and not replaced fast enough. The lack of air can cause incomplete burning allowing carbon monoxide to form. Never enclose gas furnaces, water heaters or dryers in a closet or small room without providing openings for air circulation as required by local and state code.

Venting

Indoor air quality can be affected when the products of gas combustion are not vented properly. If your appliances require venting through metal pipes, also known as flues, a match test can be used to find out if your venting is effective. Once the burner is lit and operating normally, wait approximately 30 seconds, and then hold a lighted match just below the flue-diverter on water heaters, furnaces and boilers.

If the flame leans towards you, flutters downward or goes out, the system is not drawing combustion particles outside through the vent or the flue. If you notice these signs, turn off the appliance, air out the building and call a licensed natural gas contractor immediately to inspect the equipment.

If the appliance is in an area with an attic fan or a kitchen or bathroom fan, the fan can set up vent or flue back drafts. Have a licensed contractor check your venting.

CARBON MONOXIDE

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, toxic gas, created when fossil fuels are not burned completely. CO-related accidents can involve car exhausts, blocked furnace/boiler vents and chimneys, and improperly adjusted or inadequately maintained appliances.

CO Detection

Warning signs of CO in your home can include stuffy, stale air; lingering pungent odor; condensation on windows; back drafts from a fireplace, furnace, or water heater chimney; soot; yellow burner flames (except from natural gas fireplaces and logs); burner flames or pilot lights that flutter or keep going out. If you detect these warning signs, turn off the equipment, ventilate the building and call a licensed natural gas contractor to have the equipment inspected.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends that you place CO detectors outside bedrooms in each separate sleeping area. It also recommends installing smoke alarms on each level of your home and inside every bedroom. For both types of devices, check batteries monthly and change them at least twice annually.



CO Poisoning

Symptoms of CO poisoning can include dizziness, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, headaches, ringing in the ears, blurred vision, stinging eyes and fainting. If you suspect CO poisoning, leave the building immediately and call **911** from a safe location.



IF YOU SMELL NATURAL GAS

Natural gas is non-toxic, colorless, odorless and combustible. For your safety, we add an unpleasant odorant called mercaptan so you will be able to detect escaping natural gas. Call **202-624-6092** to receive our **Natural Gas Safety** brochure with a scratch-and-sniff sample of mercaptan.

If you smell natural gas, do not attempt to locate the source of the odor. Call **911** or our **Emergency Leak Line at 703-750-1400** (or **1-800-752-7520** outside the local calling area).

Frederick, Md., customers call **911** or **301-662-2151**.
Shenandoah, Va., customers call **911**, or **540-869-1111** or **1-800-566-7436**.

If the odor is very strong or you hear a blowing or hissing noise, vacate the building immediately, leaving the doors unlocked as you go. **Do nothing that could create an ignition source** – do not light a match or use any type of phone or battery-powered equipment. Do not turn electrical equipment or light switches on or off. Do not start your car or any type of motorized equipment. Call **911** and the appropriate Washington Gas emergency numbers as instructed above only after you have reached a safe distance away from the building or area. Follow the same precautions if you are outside and smell gas, hear hissing or blowing noises, see dirt being thrown into the air, fire coming from the ground or appearing to burn aboveground, water bubbling or being blown into the air at a pond, creek or river, or if you see a dry spot in a moist field or dead or dying vegetation on or near a pipeline right-of-way.



We distribute natural gas through a network of underground pipes and service lines. If a leak should occur, it is possible for gas to migrate into buildings, including those without natural gas service.

NOTE: When calling us from another location to report a natural gas leak or other gas emergency at your home, please give the customer service representative the address or phone number where you can be reached so we can gain unimpeded access to the house or other building if necessary.

ABOUT GAS APPLIANCES

Many gas appliances have open burners. Older models also have pilot lights that burn continuously. It is very important to keep the area around your appliances clear of flammable material, particularly gasoline and other fuel containers, paints, adhesives, cleaning solvents and oily rags, which create a fire hazard.

In addition, any gas appliance located in a garage or similar location must be installed according to the applicable building code, so that all burners and burner ignition devices are at least 18 inches above the floor. Don't use or store flammable products such as those mentioned above in the same room or area where your water heater or any other gas appliance is installed.

Keep your appliance owner's manuals available and refer to them regularly. These booklets are provided by the makers of the particular models you own and contain the most complete information about them.

Knowing how to use and maintain each of your appliances properly is your best guarantee of safety. For more product safety information visit the **U.S. Product Safety Commission at www.cpsc.gov**.

YOUR GAS WATER HEATER

Water Temperature

Natural gas water heaters are highly efficient and provide a generous amount of hot water whenever needed.

For maximum efficiency and to prevent scalding accidents, lower the temperature of your water heater. Do not turn your water heater temperature above 120 degrees Fahrenheit. *Warm* or *Low* should be the appropriate setting on most water heater dials that do not have numbers.

If you have an automatic dishwasher and the manufacturer recommends a *Normal* temperature setting for your water



heater, ask your plumber about anti-scald devices for shower and sink taps.

Flammable Vapors

Because the burner is located at the bottom of the water heater, it is particularly important not to use or store flammable products – including solvents, painting materials and gasoline – anywhere nearby. These materials produce vapors that may collect on the floor and create a serious risk of fire or explosion.

YOUR GAS HEATING SYSTEM

Washington Gas strongly recommends that you have a licensed technician check your system each fall to make sure it is operating properly. If you see or suspect that something is wrong with your heating system, turn it off and call a licensed natural gas contractor for assistance with diagnosis and repair.



Filters and Ducts

Clean or replace air filters every month when your heating system is in use and every three months during the rest of the year. Clean filters help your heating unit operate properly and reduce your energy bills.

Doors and Grills

Furnace panels and grills must be in place and the fan compartment door closed when a furnace is in use. Leaving doors open could allow combustion products to enter living areas. Remember to keep the area around the furnace clear and clean.

Vents

Breaks, rust, unsealed gaps or rotted-out areas in flue venting pipes release combustion products. Have the flues and vent pipes replaced and appliances checked by a licensed contractor.

Chimneys

Bird and animal nests, leaves, or loose tiles inside the chimney can block the venting of combustion products produced by gas appliances, posing a CO or fire hazard. Have your chimney checked by a licensed contractor annually during your heating system inspection.



YOUR GAS RANGE

Burners

Gas burners may not light when turned on, or may go out when a pot boils over. In both cases, gas is still being released. Turn the burner off and wait about five minutes to let gas concentrations drop before re-attempting to light the burner.



Sometimes, part of a burner does not light at all or the flames look ragged and yellow. This usually means that the burner ports are clogged. Turn off the gas and clean out the tiny holes of the burner with an open paper clip or metal wire.

Do not use a toothpick, which may break off in the burner.

During cooking, burner flames should not be allowed to rise up around the outside of a pan. Adjust the flame to match the size of the pan.

Ovens

Air must circulate inside gas ovens when they are operating. Do not cover the holes in the bottom of the oven with foil. Always leave a one inch space between pans and oven walls.

Using the oven to heat a room or apartment during winter emergencies is dangerous—for two reasons. First, leaving burner flames on and unwatched is a fire hazard. Second, oven burners operating continuously can use up indoor oxygen and lead to the production of deadly carbon monoxide.



Cooking Safely

Many home accidents occur in the kitchen. Here are some ways to avoid mishaps:

- Keep the range clean and wipe up spills promptly. Do not store fats and oils on or over the range.
- Keep paper, aerosol cans of all kinds and fabrics – blowing curtains, loose or long sleeves – away from burners.
- Do not cover broiler pan holes with foil. Fats can collect and may ignite.
- Remember to check the cooking progress often.

YOUR GAS CLOTHES DRYER



Fire Hazards

Clean the lint filter before every load. Lint build-up wastes energy and can catch fire. Items cleaned with a spot

remover or similar product, give off flammable vapors. They should never be dried in a gas dryer. Air-dry them instead.

Venting

Gas dryer exhaust goes through a flexible metallic vent pipe or rigid vent pipe to the outdoors. Manufacturers do not recommend flexible vinyl hoses. Check venting periodically to remove lint and dust.

Lint in the vent pipe can cause a fire. If there are cracks or holes in the vent pipe, it needs to be replaced. Make sure the outside exhaust hood is in place and the flapper inside it moves freely.

YOUR GAS GRILL

Gas grills must be lighted with the top open. A natural gas grill intended for outdoor use should never be used indoors. All outdoor grills can produce deadly carbon monoxide and are designed to vent in the open air.

Always open the hood of a gas grill when lighting it. Otherwise, natural gas can concentrate in the hood and explode when ignited.

YOUR GAS LOGS OR FIREPLACES

When installing gas logs or inserts in a conventional wood-burning fireplace, special attention must be given to the manufacturer's venting specifications. Many log sets need a fully open chimney damper when burning, and some require direct venting to the outside. Gas logs are not designed for cooking.



MAKING APPLIANCES SAFE

We respond immediately and without charge to any natural gas emergency, such as escaping gas or a malfunctioning appliance. As a result, we may be required to turn off gas service to your home or appliance. If your appliance requires repair or replacement, you will be advised to call a *licensed natural gas contractor*. As with any major service or repair, you may wish to shop around to get the services and terms that are best for you.

NATURAL GAS PRODUCT INFORMATION

Buyer's Guides

Although Washington Gas does not sell natural gas products, you can call **703-237-HOME (237-4663)** or **1-800-980-8881** to request information. Washington Gas publishes a home products guide to provide information about the selection, purchase and installation of heating, water heating and other natural gas products for your home. Visit washingtongasliving.com to request or download our free **Guide to Energy Efficient Natural Gas Products**. Washington Gas highly recommends that all installations be performed by a licensed trade professional and that you check references.

OUR GAS PIPES AND YOURS

We strive to provide safe, reliable service while ensuring that the gas piping owned by the company is properly maintained. We make these efforts to avoid the potentially damaging effects of leaks and corrosion. Washington Gas owns and maintains all natural gas piping up to and including the gas meter.

Each gas customer is responsible for the maintenance and monitoring of all aboveground and buried piping on the customer's side of the meter. If this piping is not maintained, it may corrode or leak. You should periodically inspect buried gas piping located on your side of the meter for leaks and corrosion, and have it repaired if any unsafe condition is discovered. For information on companies that can perform maintenance and monitoring of all piping on your side of the meter, call Washington Gas at **703-750-1000**.

Frederick, Md., customers call **301-662-2151**.

Shenandoah, Va., customers call **540-869-1111** or **1-800-566-7436**.

CALL 811 BEFORE YOU DIG

Whether you are planting a tree in your yard or planning other excavation activities, it's important to have the underground utility lines in your yard or work area located – **BEFORE** you begin to dig. In fact, it's the law, and it's easy to comply. Just dial **811**, the national **Call Before You Dig** telephone number that initiates the process of marking the underground utility lines in your yard or on your job. Your call to **811** will be routed to your local One Call Center – in the District of Columbia, Maryland or Virginia. Local One Call Center personnel then

notify area utilities, such as Washington Gas, to mark the approximate locations of buried utility lines with high-visibility safety paint and/or flags. The service is **FREE**.

Always call **811** at least **two full business days** – excluding weekends and holidays – **BEFORE** you are scheduled to begin any excavation regardless of the size or depth. Please don't begin digging until the lines have been marked or confirmed as "no conflict." If in doubt, check with your One Call Center to be sure there are no underground utilities where you plan to dig. If for any reason you cannot connect to **811**, call **1-800-257-7777**.

Buildings

Federal and state regulations and Washington Gas policy prohibit building an enclosed structure over a natural gas line. If you have an enclosed structure over your gas line, or believe you do, please contact us at **703-750-1000** to arrange for a locating inspection.

Frederick, Md., customers call **301-662-2151**.

Shenandoah, Va., customers call **540-869-1111** or **1-800-566-7436**.



Meters

Washington Gas owns and maintains the gas meter and the piping leading to the meter from the street and requires that the meter and area around it be easily accessible. In an emergency, the quickest place to turn off gas is at the meter.

Tampering with a natural gas meter is **illegal** and **dangerous**. The natural gas meter at your home, whether located inside or outside the building, belongs to Washington Gas. Call our **Gas Theft Hotline at 703-750-4570** or the **Corporate Security** office at **703-750-4370** if you see suspicious activity involving a Washington Gas meter. **Frederick, Md.**, customers call **301-662-2151**. **Shenandoah, Va.**, customers call **540-869-1111** or **1-800-566-7436**. The company offers rewards for verified reports of illegal piping connections or stolen meters. You may leave a recorded message with your name and other contact information, but you are not required to identify yourself unless you wish to be considered for the reward.

If you are remodeling and want your natural gas service line or meter moved, call us at least 8 to 12 weeks before the



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.



MissUtility.net
In Maryland and the
District of Columbia



MissUtilityofVirginia.com
In Virginia