

Recognizing and Responding to Pipeline Emergencies

Remember, pipelines carry both gases and hazardous liquids. Some pipeline gases are lighter than air and will rise; other gases are heavier and will stay near the ground. Many liquids form gaseous vapor clouds when released into the air. Be aware that all petroleum gases and liquids are flammable and, therefore, any pipeline leak can be potentially dangerous.

Signs of a pipeline leak:

Sight – A fire, explosion or pool of liquid on the ground near a pipeline, a rainbow sheen on water, a dense white vapor cloud, fog or ice over a pipeline right-of-way, continuous bubbling in wet or flooded areas, or dead or discolored vegetation

Sound – An unusual noise coming from the pipeline, such as a hissing or roaring sound

Smell – An unusual chemical or petroleum odor, such as gasoline, oil, sulfur, or the pungent “rotten egg” smell of odorized natural gas



If you suspect a pipeline leak has occurred:

What **TO** Do

If you detect the unusual odor near or inside a building, turn all gas appliances all the way OFF.

Turn off and abandon any motorized equipment you may be operating near the leak site.

Leave the area immediately by foot and remain upwind of the leak site.

Warn others – if it is safe to do so without entering the leak area.

Call 911 or your local emergency response number from a neighbor's house or other location well away from the pipeline leak.

Call the pipeline company's 24-hour emergency phone number as listed on a nearby pipeline marker or from another source, if available.

Keep ignition sources away from the area.

What **NOT** to Do

DO NOT enter or re-enter the area.

DO NOT attempt to operate any pipeline valves.

DO NOT touch, breathe, or make contact with leaking materials.

DO NOT attempt to extinguish a fire on the pipeline right-of-way.

DO NOT light a cigarette, start an engine, open a garage door, switch on/off light switches, or do anything that may create a spark.

DO NOT use a cell phone while near the suspected emergency area.

Response to a pipeline leak could include:

- Shutting down the pipeline system
- Responding to the emergency location
- Closing valves to isolate the problem
- Identifying hazardous areas
- Safeguarding the environment
- Protecting the health and safety of all persons, emergency response agency personnel and Garland Power & Light employees
- Excavating and repairing the damaged line
- Containing and cleaning up the spill



Pipeline Safety is an Issue that Connects Us All



The public expects safe, reliable and environmentally sound energy pipeline transportation systems. Socially and economically, we all rely on the oil, natural gas and other products delivered by pipelines. These products touch every one of us every day, providing energy to heat our buildings, cook our meals and fuel our vehicles.

Pipelines are safe and efficient, and are the only feasible method for delivering the vast quantities of energy products that we require each day. Close to two million miles of energy transportation pipelines cross the United States alone, from production fields and import terminals to homes and businesses. Pipeline safety truly is an issue that connects us all.

While pipelines have a good safety record relative to the tremendous volumes of products they carry, pipeline accidents can and sometimes do occur. For that reason, we urge everyone to become aware of pipelines in their communities, and to understand how to recognize and respond to pipeline emergencies and help prevent pipeline damage.

Out of Sight, Out of Mind?

Since pipelines are usually buried underground, line markers and warning signs are used to indicate their presence in an area along the pipeline.

Markers and warning signs are located at frequent intervals along pipeline rights-of-way (ROW). They are found where a pipeline intersects a street, highway, railway or waterway, and at other prominent points along the route. They can be any color, but are generally yellow, black and red in color.

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.

Pipeline markers and warning signs indicate only the presence of a pipeline. **They should not be used or relied upon to determine the exact location of the pipeline.** Pipeline locations within a ROW may vary both horizontally and vertically (depth), and the pipeline may not follow a straight course between markers. Additionally, there may be multiple pipelines located in the same ROW.

Pipeline markers are helpful in determining that a pipeline is located in an area. However, **before digging in the area, all excavators, including the general public, must call their area's one call center at 1-800-DIG-TESS (1-800-344-8377) to have the specific locations of underground pipelines determined and marked.** In some cases, the pipeline operator may require that any excavation near its pipelines be monitored by company personnel.

Digging-related damage is a major cause of pipeline accidents. It is important that anyone planning to dig contact their area's one-call center before digging. This will allow the pipeline operator to determine and mark the exact location of the pipeline within the planned digging area. Calling the one call center before digging is required by law. The one-call process is designed to help prevent damage to pipelines and to save lives.

**Call 1-800-DIG-TESS (1-800-344-8377)
before you dig – it's the law.**



What to do if you are digging and disturb a pipeline:

Even if you happen to cause what seems to be only minor damage to a buried pipeline, notify the pipeline company immediately. A gouge, scrape, dent or crease to the pipe or coating may cause a future break or leak, so **don't cover it up.** It is imperative that the pipeline company inspect and repair any damage to the line, for everyone's safety. If you become aware of such an incident or potential incident, please contact the pipeline operator immediately at **972-485-6465.**

Pipeline Awareness is a Team Effort