DTE

Natural Gas Pipeline Safety

Public Officials: What You Need To Know

Be Safe and Report

If a pipeline leak or emergency occurs, from a safe distance, call 911 and then DTE Energy at 800.947.5000

Dear Public Official,

For more than a century, DTE Energy has maintained a safe and reliable natural gas delivery system for its customers. Today, that commitment continues.

We deliver natural gas to 1.3 million families and businesses in a 20,000 square-mile service area. This vast network of underground pipelines carries clean-burning natural gas from production and storage facilities to residential and business customers throughout Michigan. It also helps to fuel our economy and way of life.

DTE diligently monitors thousands of miles of natural gas pipelines. We inspect gas delivery systems, both by air and land, to look for evidence of a pipeline leak or damage. In fact, U.S. Department of Transportation records show that pipelines consistently have the highest safety record among all major transportation systems.

Since DTE Energy's natural gas pipelines run underneath roadways and through yards and parking lots in your community, we need your cooperation to continue this stellar safety record. Please keep the areas around and above these pipelines clear of trees, extra soil, roads, trees, shrubs, swimming pools, decks, sheds, swing sets or other play equipment, above-ground structures and underground structures, such as drainage tiles and sewer lines. We recommend that you become familiar with the following information and share it with others in your community. Thank you.

FACTS ABOUT NATURAL GAS

Natural gas is non-toxic and lighter than air. In large concentrations it will displace the air in enclosed spaces and cause suffocation because of the lack of oxygen. However, it will rise and disperse if released into open air. Natural gas is odorless, so DTE adds a "rotten egg" smell to the gas, making leaks easier to detect.

Michigan's unique geology allows us to store up to 132 billion cubic feet of gas in naturally occurring, underground rock formations. This enables us to purchase large quantities of natural gas when prices are lower and pass along that savings to you.

WE NEED YOUR ASSISTANCE

In the interest of public safety, we ask local officials to establish rules and procedures regarding development and construction near natural gas pipelines. Guidelines should include:

- Involving pipeline operators early in the planning of potential development or construction in the vicinity of a pipeline or pipeline easement
- Requiring review and approval of all development or construction from impacted easement holders
- Requesting residents, excavators and developers to contact the pipeline operator regarding questions about pipelines
- Limiting development activities in the vicinity of a pipeline or pipeline easement that could impair pipeline operation and maintenance

You can also help us identify high consequence areas (HCA). HCAs typically are densely populated areas or rural areas containing identified sites adjacent to the pipeline. Identified sites include churches, schools, hospitals, day-care centers, assisted-living facilities, campgrounds or other buildings and outside areas where people congregate. You can help by alerting us to these sites. If you have questions or suspicious activity to report near our pipelines, please call us at **800.363.9541**.

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WHAT HAPPENS IF A PIPELINE IS DAMAGED?

When a pipeline is damaged, the supply of natural gas to homes and businesses could be interrupted. A damaged pipeline can leak natural gas – possibly causing fires, explosions or asphyxiation. These hazards could be caused by:

- Extreme natural events, such as floods and tornadoes
- Fire or explosion near a pipeline
- Collapsed buildings that break or damage gas pipelines
- Water main breaks that weaken roadways and pavement, damaging gas pipelines
- Under or overpressure in the gas system
- Equipment failure
- Uncontrolled escaping gas

DTE Energy quickly responds to any natural gas emergency. We continuously monitor our natural gas system using sensors, computers and remote telemetry equipment that detect changes in pressure that might indicate a concern.

HOW TO AVOID DAMAGING A NATURAL GAS PIPELINE

Most often, pipelines are damaged because people begin digging without knowing what is beneath their digging site. Damaging a pipeline could result in a fine. If someone in your community is planning to excavate, please remind them to dig safely using four simple steps:

1. **Contact MISS DIG at 811 or missdig811.org** at least three business days before excavating. This organization works with energy companies to send someone out to indicate where the natural gas utilities are buried. This service is fast, it's free, and it's the law.
2. **Wait until the flags are placed.** Once flags are in position, it is safe to begin excavation projects.

3. **Expose utility lines by hand-digging.** Before using any power equipment, carefully hand-dig where the utility lines are marked to expose them. If you are unable to locate the utility lines, please contact MISS DIG and wait for assistance from the utility company.
4. **Respect the marks.** Be aware of all underground utility line locations, even if you're not working near them. And never drive heavy vehicles or store materials over marked utility lines. Remind children not to remove the flags. If a child does so, do not attempt to reposition the flags. Contact MISS DIG to indicate the utility lines need to be marked again.

Also, remind all excavators to notify DTE Energy if their digging equipment or tools contact our underground pipelines. Minor damage, such as nicks, scratches, cuts, scrapes, dents or gouges, can result in pipeline failure or a major incident in the future if not properly examined soon after the occurrence. Contact DTE Energy before back-filling your excavation.

FARM SAFETY

811 is for farmers, too. If they are doing any deep trenching or post installation on their land, please instruct them to call MISS DIG at least three business days beforehand to keep them and family members safe and avoid an inconvenient disruption of utility services.

HOW TO IDENTIFY A PIPELINE

Our natural gas pipelines are buried, so it's easy to forget about them. Sometimes the approximate route of an underground pipeline is marked with yellow pipeline markers. The markers do not indicate the exact location of the pipeline. The markers also list the name of the company that operates the natural gas pipeline and a phone number to call in case of an emergency.

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However, it is important to note that some pipelines are not marked. Also, pipeline markers do not indicate how deep the pipeline is buried beneath the ground.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF A GAS PIPELINE LEAK

- A blowing or hissing sound
- Dust blowing from a hole in the ground
- Continuous bubbling in wet or flooded areas
- An odor similar to the smell of rotten eggs
- Dead or discolored vegetation in an otherwise green area
- Abnormally dry or hardened soil
- Flames, if a leak has ignited

WHAT TO DO IF A PIPELINE LEAK OR EMERGENCY OCCURS

- Do not use any telephones (including cell phones), doorbells, light switches, pagers or any other electronic devices
- Avoid all open flames. Do not smoke.
- Do not start up or shut down any machinery, vehicles or equipment

Leave the area immediately. Upwind of a leak is the safest place to be. From a location where you no longer smell natural gas, call 911 and then DTE's gas leak hotline at **800.947.5000***

- Keep people at a safe distance from the area
- Do not attempt to stop the leak. If the gas is burning, let it burn.
- Do not attempt to extinguish the flame. Burning gas will not explode.
- Do not re-enter the area of the leak until you are informed to do so by DTE Energy

** If you are a DTE Energy customer experiencing a non-pipeline gas emergency (such as a gas leak inside your home or business), call **800.947.5000**.*

HOW WE KEEP OUR PIPELINES SAFE

DTE Energy has established a Pipeline Integrity Management program in conjunction with federal and state regulations. Inspection and maintenance work is performed regularly, such as leak surveys and corrosion control. Pipeline segments are replaced if necessary. This program enhances preventive and mitigative measures DTE Energy already has in place to maintain the continued safe and reliable operation of our pipeline system. These measures include:

- Upgrading more than 500 miles of pipeline for our customers this year
- Conducting more than 300,000 gas meter safety inspections annually
- Performing routine inspections inside some pipeline sections, using a sophisticated electronic device sent through pipelines to identify internal problems
- Continuously monitoring our natural gas system using sensors, computers and remote telemetry equipment that detect changes in pressure that might indicate a concern
- Surveying nearly 10,000 miles of pipeline each year

DAMAGE PREVENTION INFORMATION AND CONTACTS:

DTE ENERGY – dteenergy.com/gassafety

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

MISS DIG – www.missdig811.org

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS INFORMATION:

American Gas Association – www.aga.org

U.S. Department of Transportation Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration – http://phmsa.dot.gov/pipeline

To view a list of pipeline operators in your area, visit **https://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov**

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