

# Natural Gas Emergencies

## >> How police and fire departments should handle natural gas emergencies.

### What You Need to Know About Natural Gas

**Natural gas is nontoxic.** It is not poisonous. It is harmless to breathe, except if present in sufficient quantities to displace the normal air and cause suffocation due to oxygen deficiency.

**Natural gas is lighter than air.** It is only a little more than half as heavy as air. Therefore, it rises if not confined. It rises from an excavation. Natural gas leaks in buildings should be ventilated from the upper levels.

**Natural gas is easy to ignite.** The ignition temperature is about 1,200° F. All electronic equipment (radios, flashlights, etc.) a firefighter carries when responding to a suspected natural gas leak area should be intransigently safe or be turned off. Any tiny spark (doorbell, light switch, telephone, etc.) is hot enough to ignite a combustible mixture. A combustible mixture almost always exists somewhere in the vicinity of a leak. The combustibles range of natural gas is 5% to 15% concentration in air.

### What To Do if Natural Gas is Escaping and Burning Outdoors

1. Radio the **911 dispatch** center and have them contact the natural gas utility whose facilities are involved
2. Let natural gas burn
3. Clear the area
4. Protect nearby combustibles
5. Stay at a safe distance



#### Indoors

1. Radio the **911 dispatch** center and have them contact the natural gas utility whose facilities are involved
2. Shut off natural gas supply at the appliance or meter, if possible
3. Protect nearby combustibles
4. Do not extinguish the flame until natural gas supply can be shut off



### What To Do if Natural Gas is Escaping but NOT Burning Outdoors

1. Radio the **911 dispatch** center and have them contact the natural gas utility whose facilities are involved
2. Clear the area
3. Shut off natural gas supply, if possible
4. Eliminate ignition sources
5. Use fog pattern to eliminate static
6. Stay at a safe distance



#### Indoors

1. Radio the **911 dispatch** center and have them contact the natural gas utility whose facilities are involved
2. Evacuate the building
3. Shut off natural gas supply at the appliance or meter, if possible
4. Eliminate ignition sources
5. Ventilate the building
6. Stay at a safe distance



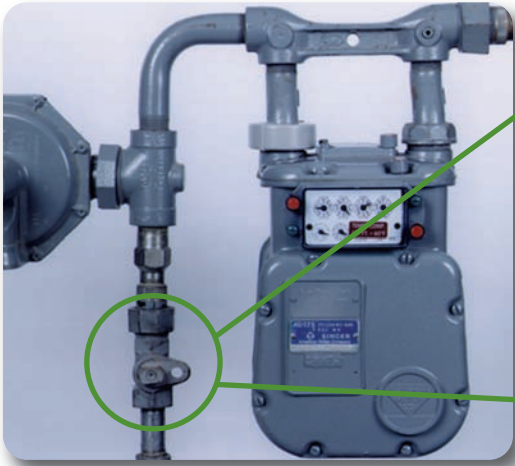
**Note:** This information applies to only natural gas and only to the NYSEG and RG&E service areas.

See the other side for instructions on shutting off natural gas service at the meter >>

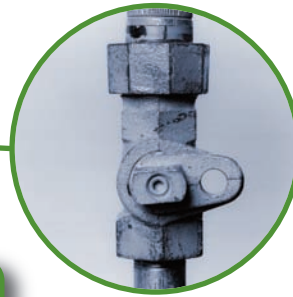


## How to Shut Off Natural Gas Service

1. Locate the shut-off valve near the meter
2. Using a wrench, turn the valve to the closed position



Valve Open



Valve Closed

**If you shut it off ... leave it off!  
Let NYSEG or RG&E turn it back on.**



When contacting the 911 dispatch center or your utility, give name, location and conditions found as completely as possible.

## Important Contact Information



**NYSEG**

**Natural gas odors or emergencies:**

**1.800.572.1121** (24 hours a day, every day)  
or call **911**



**RG&E**

**Natural gas odors or emergencies:**

**1.800.743.1702** (24 hours a day, every day)  
or call **911**