



Natural Gas Emergencies

How police and fire departments should handle natural gas emergencies

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, natural gas rises when it is not confined. Natural gas rises from an open 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 intrinsically safe or be turned off. Any tiny spark (doorbell, light switch, phone, 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
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
2. Do not extinguish the flame until natural gas supply can be shut off
3. Shut off natural gas supply at the appliance or meter, if possible
4. Protect nearby combustibles



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
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

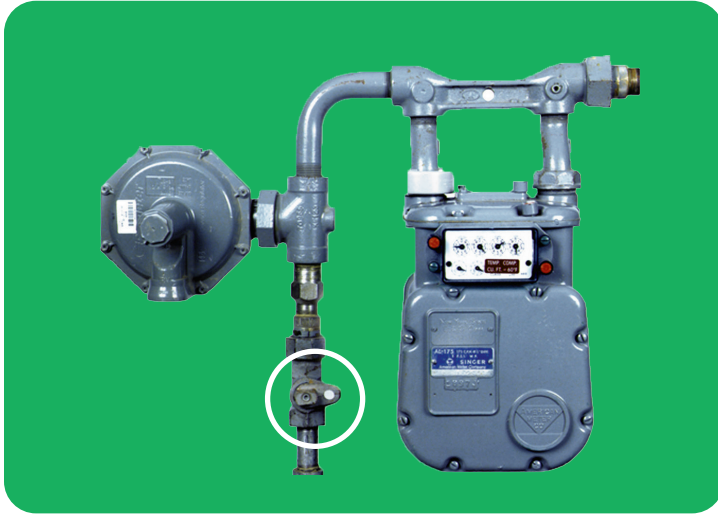
1. Radio the **911** dispatch center and have them contact the natural gas utility
2. Evacuate the building
3. Shut off natural gas supply at the appliance or meter, if possible
4. Eliminate ignition sources
5. Ventilate the building
6. Stay at a safe distance



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

How to shut off natural gas service

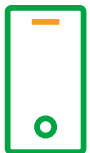
1. Locate the shut-off valve near the meter



2. Using a wrench, turn the valve from the open to the closed position



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



When contacting the 911 dispatch center or utility, give this information as completely as possible:



Your name



Location



Conditions found



Natural gas odors or emergencies
800.572.1121 (24 hours a day, every day) or call 911



Natural gas odors or emergencies
800.743.1702 (24 hours a day, every day) or call 911