





## Report osprey nests built on power lines

NorthWestern Energy has installed hundreds of platforms where ospreys can safely build nests away from power lines.

However, this time of year when ospreys return to Montana, we often see the birds building nests on power lines. This can cause power outages and even fires, and the nests' proximity to energized equipment puts the birds at risk of electrocution.

If you see an osprey nest on a power pole, please report it by calling us at 888-467-2669 or filling out the online form at [NorthWesternEnergy.com/customer-service/safety](https://NorthWesternEnergy.com/customer-service/safety).

When NorthWestern learns of an osprey nest on one of our poles, we implement the Avian Protection Plan, which includes removing the nest if it does not have ospreys or osprey eggs in it and, in some cases, providing an alternative platform for the ospreys.

## Secure baling twine to protect ospreys

Baling twine is often found in osprey nests, but it can be deadly to hatchlings and adults who become entangled in it.

It's unclear why ospreys are so attracted to baling twine, but the best way to prevent it from ending up in nests is to pick up all baling twine and store it in buildings or containers with secure lids.

The Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society offers a twine collection and recycling site where you can drop off baling twine. For more information, visit [yvaudubon.org/baling-twine-recycling/](https://yvaudubon.org/baling-twine-recycling/)

## Call before you dig

April 28 is National Arbor Day. Planting a tree is a great way to celebrate, but before you begin any digging project, be sure to call 811 or visit [call811.com](https://call811.com).

Call at least two full business days before you plan to dig to allow time for all underground utilities to be marked. Even on your property and in your yard, damages caused by hitting an underground utility can be expensive and even deadly.

Once utilities are marked, be sure to hand excavate within 18 inches on each side of markings. If you ever hit a gas line, call 911 and NorthWestern Energy immediately. Even minor damage to a pipeline can result in future leaks.



## Plan before you plant

A healthy tree might live for a century or more, so be sure you're planting the right tree in the right place.

- Before you plant a tree, know where overhead power lines are located and plant at least 20 feet away. Trees that grow taller than 40 feet should be planted more than 35 feet away.
- Be sure trees are also planted at least 20 feet away from buried gas lines. Roots can become tangled around pipelines causing damage, and if the tree should blow over, it can damage the pipeline if the roots become entwined and pull up the pipeline.
- If your yard has a ground-level transformer (a large, green, metal box), be sure to leave room for our crews to access the transformer. Plant your shrubs at least 10 feet away from the front, and 2 feet away from the sides and back

## Excess Gas Flow Valve Notice

If a gas service is installed to your home, you have the option to purchase an Excess Flow Valve (EFV) to be installed by NorthWestern Energy. An EFV is intended to stop the flow of gas if the service line is severed. The valve is placed in the service line where it leaves the gas main.

An EFV will stop the flow of gas only if the service line is severely damaged. It is important to note that an EFV will not protect you from a leak or broken line inside your home, or a small leak on the line in your yard. An example of when the valve provides protection is in the event the gas service is damaged from digging or extreme ground movement.

As required by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), we are notifying you that an EFV that meets the minimum prescribed DOT performance standards is available for installation on your natural gas service line.

The cost of installing the EFV will need to be evaluated by an engineer. If you are interested, please contact your local NorthWestern office to set up an appointment. Payment is required prior to installation of the EFV.

## Recognizing a gas pipeline leak

Call 911, if you notice any of these signs of a pipeline leak:

- An unusual blowing or hissing sound coming from the ground.
- Dirt or dust blowing from a hole in the ground.
- Bubbling ponds.
- Dead or discolored vegetation in an otherwise green area near a pipeline right of way.
- A fire close to a buried pipeline.



## Pipeline safety

### Pipeline markers

Markers, placed at all public road and railroad crossings, show the approximate location of pipelines and identify the companies that operate them. These markers indicate the pipeline content, the name of the pipeline operator and the operator's emergency phone number.

Even if the pipeline is marked, you must call 811 to have utility lines marked before digging. The pipeline may not follow a straight course between markers. Call 811 at least three business days before beginning any digging project.

### Pipeline monitoring

As a pipeline operator, we monitor the status of our pipelines seven days a week, 24 hours a day to ensure they are safe and secure. We use computers, alarms, meters and satellite technology to control and check our pipelines. The monitoring systems detect changes in pressure and flow and can activate warnings and safeguards if a leak is detected.

### HCA and IMPs

Federal pipeline safety regulations use the concept of High Consequence Areas, or HCAs, to identify specific locations and areas where an accidental release of natural gas could have the most significant adverse consequences. Once an HCA has been identified, operators devote additional focus to ensure the integrity of pipelines in that area. We have in place an Integrity Management Program, or IMP, that defines the steps and timelines for identifying HCAs, assessing the integrity of the pipelines and taking aggressive steps to mitigate the risks to people and property near HCAs.

### Pipeline purpose and reliability

Pipelines are the safest way to transport energy products, including natural gas, crude oil and other fuels. The U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline & Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) regulates pipelines with the help of state partners. According to government and industry statistics, the most common cause of pipeline incidents is improper or unauthorized digging near a pipeline, which is why it's important to call 811 before you dig. Pipeline operators carefully build, maintain and monitor the integrity and security of their lines.