ENERGY CONNECTIONS

JUNE 2015

Safety Takes All of Us

Each June, the National Safety Council encourages organizations to get involved and participate in National Safety Month (NSM). NSM is an annual observance to educate and influence behaviors around the leading causes of preventable injuries and deaths. Here are a few of the top ways to prevent common injuries:

- Stay off your cell phone when you are driving. Driving is a privilege that comes with a shared responsibility of safety. Never text and drive.
- Get trained in first aid, CPR and AED use online or in a classroom.
- Check, and if necessary, change, the batteries on your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors regularly.
- More than one in five drowning victims are children under the age of 15, and most incidents happen when a child falls into a pool or is left alone in the bathtub. Keep your kids safe by enrolling them in swimming lessons and always watch over them near any body of water.
- Take caution with ladders. Make sure they are in good working condition and look up, look out and look around for overhead power lines when transporting a ladder or doing any overhead work.

Share these strategies with your family, friends and neighbors. You play a large part in keeping those around you safe!

We're Focused on Your Safety

As your local natural gas provider, we want you to know all that we are doing to ensure the safety of our pipeline system.

Pipelines are operated under extensive federal and state regulations and industry standards, to ensure the safety and health of the public and the environment. These regulations and standards cover pipeline location, design, construction, operation and maintenance, safety testing and ongoing procedures to ensure the integrity of the pipelines. Both federal and state pipeline safety inspectors also inspect our pipelines.

NorthWestern Energy has a "Pipeline Integrity Management Program" (IMP) in place, which is a comprehensive program of pipeline inspections, assessments and mitigation to ensure that all segments of our natural gas pipelines meet federal and state safety requirements and are operated safely.

How Do I Know Where a Pipeline is Located?

Pipeline markers show the approximate location of pipelines and identify the companies that operate the pipeline. Pipeline markers, sometimes called right-of-way markers, are placed at frequent intervals along transmission and distribution pipeline right-of-ways, public road crossings, railroad crossings, and other prominent points along the route.

These markers identify what type of material is transported, the name of the pipeline operator and the operator's emergency phone number. Pipeline markers are generally yellow, black and orange in color. The primary function of these above ground markers is to identify the general location of the pipeline as an alert to those who might be working along the pipeline corridor for another utility or during the construction of homes or businesses nearby. It is a federal crime for any person to deface, damage, remove or willfully destroy any pipeline sign or right-of-way marker.

America's infrastructures, including pipelines, are a matter of national security. If you see any suspicious activity along a pipeline right-of-way, please report it to NorthWestern Energy as quickly as possible by calling our emergency Customer Contact Center. Emergency line operators are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

To view and download maps of transmission pipelines in your county, see the National Pipeline Mapping System website, an online mapping program managed by the federal government. **www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov**

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What to Consider When You're Outside

The leading cause of serious pipeline incidents, including those causing deaths and injuries, is damage caused by an outside force. In most cases, these incidents are entirely preventable. The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) and other stakeholders invest a considerable amount of resources to ensure communities understand how to practice effective pipeline damage prevention techniques to minimize the possibility of pipeline damages and associated injuries. Calling before you dig is the first rule to remember when conducting any underground-related activities. The law requires you to phone the "One-Call" center at 8-1-1 at least two full business days (excluding holidays) prior to conducting any form of digging activity.

Any work that requires **any amount** of dirt to be moved – should include a call to 811 – it's free, it's the law and it will ensure you can proceed with your digging project safely. You might think that the job is too small, but even hand shovels can cause severe damage.

Another item to consider when working outdoors is the area around your gas meter. It is important that this area remains free of obstructions at all times. Do not build permanent structures over, near, or around the meter set or other NorthWestern Energy equipment.

Notify NorthWestern if you will be completing work that may require relocation of facilities, such as building additions, decks, garages, landscaping, etc.

What You Can Do

We often think of heat, hot water and cooking when we consider the many benefits of natural gas. Natural gas is reliable and safe as long as it is used properly and the related equipment is properly maintained.

Preventing damage, recognizing a leak and knowing what to do in the event of a leak are important ways you can help ensure your safety and the safety of others.

Learn how to recognize a leak:

Natural gas is odorless and invisible so, as a safety precaution, a harmless chemical is added that gives gas a rotten egg or sulfur-like odor.

You can recognize a natural gas leak in several other ways, including an unusual hissing noise, blowing dirt for no apparent reason, bubbling water, an unusual dry spot in the ground or dead vegetation for no apparent reason.

Know how to respond:

If you smell gas or suspect a gas leak, don't delay – get away! Get everyone away from the area or out of the building immediately, and then call 911 from a safe distance. NorthWestern Energy will work with emergency personal to assess the situation.

Do not do anything that might cause a spark, including turning on or off any electrical or battery-operated devices or using garage door openers, radios, televisions, computers or telephones. Avoid open flames. Do not strike a match or flick a lighter. Do not smoke.

Finally, do not return to the area until you have been advised that it is safe.

What is CSST?

Should I be concerned if it is in my home?

Corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST) is a continuous, flexible, stainless steel pipe that is typically covered with a yellow exterior plastic coating. CSST is used to supply gas in residential, commercial and industrial structures.

It is usually routed beneath, through and alongside floor joists in your basement, inside interior wall cavities, and on top of ceiling joists in attic spaces. All CSST must be bonded and grounded according to installation instructions by a qualified person. If CSST is not properly grounded, current from a lightning strike could travel through the structure's natural gas piping system and cause a leak or, in some cases, a fire.

CSST may have been installed in your home or business if it was built after 1990, or if work has been performed on the natural gas piping system since that time – such as having a new furnace or stove installed. If CSST has been used in your home or business, contact a licensed electrician for confirmation that a bonding device was installed. For more information on CSST, visit **www.csstsafety.com**.

NOTE: CSST should not be confused with flexible natural gas appliance connectors (products that connect the piping in the wall directly to an appliance). CSST is NOT approved to be used as a flexible natural gas appliance connector.

Important Customer Notice:

The maintenance of any buried gas piping downstream of the gas meter is the responsibility of the home/property owner or current occupant. This includes any buried sections of line to gas fired appliances or other structures on the property. NorthWestern Energy is required to inform customers with privately-owned natural gas or propane service lines of their responsibility to inspect and maintain their piping (Code of Federal Regulations 49 CFR 192.16). Customers should have the pipes periodically inspected for leaks and metallic pipes should also be inspected for corrosion. Plumbing contractors and heating contractors can assist in locating, inspecting, and repairing a customer's buried piping. Any unsafe conditions should be repaired immediately or the flow of gas should be shut off. Piping that is not maintained may be subject to corrosion or leaking. When digging near buried gas pipes, the pipes should be located in advance and the excavation done by hand.

Aviso importante del cliente: El mantenimiento de la tubería de gas subterránea que va en rumbo descendente del medidor de gas hacia los aparatos que funcionan con gas u otras varias estructuras en la propiedad, es responsabilidad del propietario o inquilino actual de la propiedad/casa. NorthWestern Energy debe informarles a los clientes que tienen el servicio privado de gas natural o gas propano acerca de su responsabilidad de inspeccionar y dar mantenimiento a su tubería (Código de Regla

Contact us...

MONTANA
Customer Contact Center (888) 467-2669
7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F
Emergency 24/7 Service
Call Before You Dig 811
Energy Efficiency (800) 823-5995

NEBRASKA
Customer Contact Center (800) 245-6977
7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F
Emergency 24/7 Service
Call Before You Dig 811

SOUTH DAKOTA
Customer Contact Center (800) 245-6977
7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F
Emergency 24/7 Service
Call Before You Dig 811

PAYMENT
Automated Phone
Payment Option: (800) 218-4959
(via checking, savings, or money market account)
SpeedPay Automated
Phone Payment Option: (877) 361-4927
(via credit card account)

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