

# What you need to know about pipeline safety

Nicor Gas carefully maintains a network of natural gas mains and service pipelines that deliver natural gas to more than 640 communities in Illinois. This comprehensive infrastructure provides the natural gas necessary to successfully serve more than two million homes and businesses.

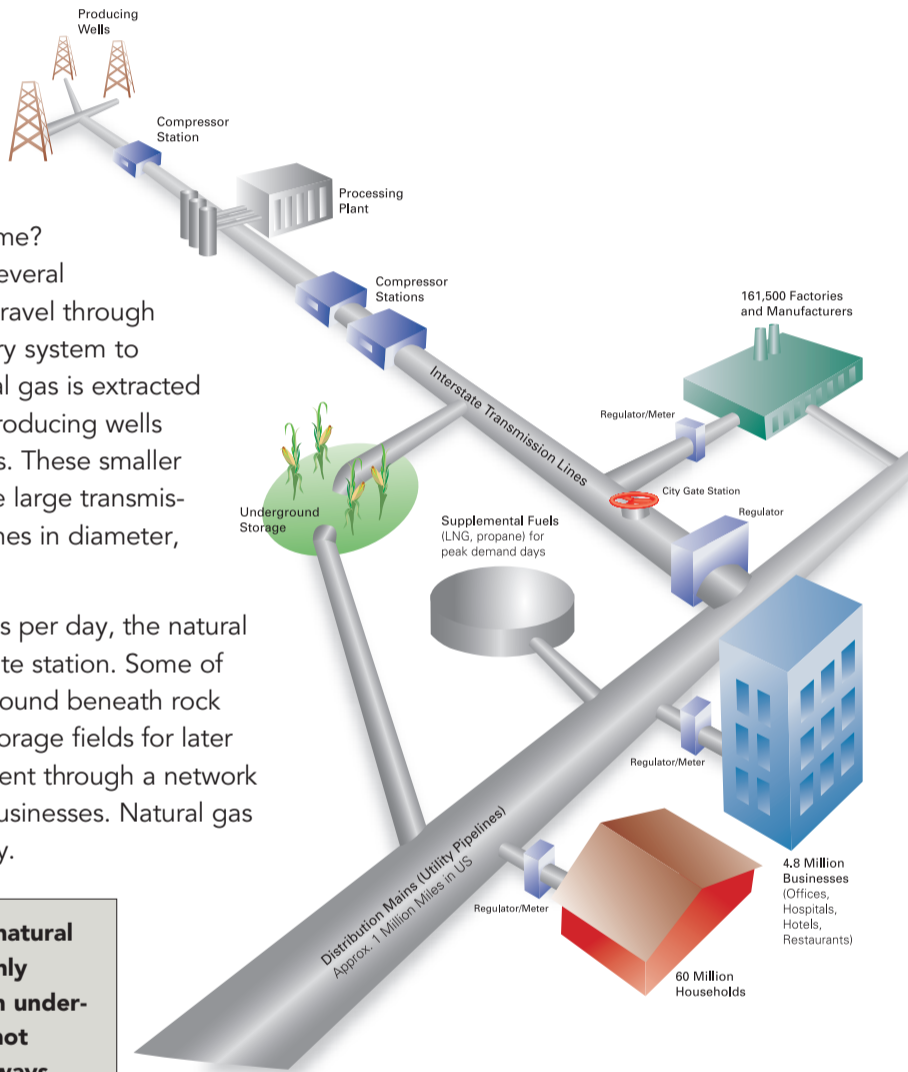
We want to take this opportunity to explain how the network of underground pipelines that bring gas to your home operate, why it is important to prevent damage to these pipelines and actions you can take to ensure safety around natural gas pipelines.



## Natural gas pipelines: safe, sound and underground

Ever wonder how the natural gas that warms your house and cooks your food gets to your home? Every day in the United States, several million cubic feet of natural gas travel through an underground pipeline delivery system to 64 million consumers. The natural gas is extracted from deep inside the earth via producing wells and then into gathering pipelines. These smaller pipelines eventually feed into the large transmission pipes, typically 26 to 42 inches in diameter, that crisscross the nation.

After a journey of up to 700 miles per day, the natural gas arrives at a Nicor Gas city gate station. Some of the natural gas is stored underground beneath rock formations at one of our eight storage fields for later use, while the rest of the gas is sent through a network of smaller pipes to homes and businesses. Natural gas is also used to produce electricity.



**Because such large volumes of natural gas must be transported, the only feasible way to do so is through underground pipelines. Pipelines do not crowd our highways and waterways as trucks and barges would, nor do they contribute to traffic congestion or highway accidents.**

## Natural gas lines are underground... but where?

Natural gas companies, including Nicor Gas, install aboveground pipeline markers to indicate the approximate location of buried large diameter, high pressure gas transmission lines. These line markers display the name of the pipeline operator and the telephone number where the operator can be reached in case of an emergency. Line markers are placed at public road crossings except in urban areas. Pipeline markers and warning signs indicate only the presence of a pipeline. They should not be used or relied upon to determine the exact location of the pipeline.





## Get the scoop before you dig

The Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators (JULIE) is the free Illinois one-call system for locating underground facilities. If you or a contractor will be digging, the person doing the digging is required by state law to contact JULIE by dialing 811 at least 48 hours in advance, not including weekends and holidays. This allows utilities time to identify and mark their buried facilities using paint and/or flags. You can also make an online JULIE e-Request at [www.illinois1call.com](http://www.illinois1call.com).

When you call JULIE, be prepared to provide the following information:

- ✓ Your name, address and phone number
- ✓ Your company's name and address (if applicable)
- ✓ Location of the dig site
- ✓ Extent of the work involved (reason for dig)
- ✓ Date work will begin
- ✓ Permit number (if applicable)

At the end of your call, the JULIE operator will give you a dig number, which you may need if additional calls to JULIE are necessary (e.g. to have utility marks refreshed).



## "Watch and Protect" for business customers

Nicor Gas carefully patrols all our "critical" gas lines – those lines that are eight inches or larger in diameter and run at higher pressures. If, after you contact JULIE, it is determined that your project location is near a critical gas line, you will be contacted by our Watch and Protect department. In many instances, a Nicor Gas representative will be onsite during digging. This service is free.

## Are underground gas lines safe?

Yes, safety is the number one priority of America's natural gas industry. Federal pipeline safety codes require that distribution systems comply with requirements for design, construction, testing, inspection, operations and maintenance from the point of connection to the point of transmission, up to and including the gas meter that is connected to your home.

At Nicor Gas, we maintain our system by regularly monitoring for corrosion and leaks, and we work with experts in the industry to continually enhance our pipeline safety and training methods.

The leading cause of accidents on the pipeline delivery system is from damage caused by excavators who fail to call JULIE for the proper location of the pipe.

**The pipeline infrastructure, which includes 1.4 million miles of natural gas pipeline, is the nation's safest energy delivery system according to U.S. government statistics. Safety incidents on natural gas pipelines are rare, yet more natural gas is traveling through the pipeline system than ever before.**

## How to recognize and react to a gas leak

Gas leaks can be very dangerous, potentially resulting in a deadly fire or explosion, so be sure to know the signs of a gas leak and what to do in an emergency. There are three ways to detect a leak:



**SMELL** — natural gas is injected with a distinct odor, which many people equate to that of rotten eggs. Contact Nicor Gas for a scratch 'n sniff card with this scent.



**SIGHT** — visible blowing dirt, bubbling water or discolored vegetation near a buried natural gas line.



**SOUND** — a hissing or blowing sound near the gas meter or gas appliances.

If you suspect a gas leak, follow these steps:

1. Exit the building or area immediately, leaving doors and windows open as you exit. Do not open windows if they're not already open. Do not use your telephone or cell phone, operate any appliance, light a match or turn light switches on or off.
2. Call Nicor Gas at 1 888 Nicor4u (1 888 642-6748) from a neighboring location.
3. Wait at the neighboring location until Nicor Gas and emergency officials determine it is safe to return.



## Where can I learn more?

For more information about pipeline safety, we encourage you to visit the following Web sites:

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Nicor Gas:                        | <a href="http://www.nicorgas.com/pipeline">www.nicorgas.com/pipeline</a>       |
| American Gas Association:         | <a href="http://www.aga.org">www.aga.org</a>                                   |
| Common Ground Alliance:           | <a href="http://www.commongroundalliance.com">www.commongroundalliance.com</a> |
| JULIE:                            | <a href="http://www.illinois1call.com">www.illinois1call.com</a>               |
| National Pipeline Mapping System: | <a href="http://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov">www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov</a>             |