



NATURAL GAS 101



What is natural gas?

Natural gas is a fossil fuel that is naturally occurring in the earth's crust, and it is widely used across Canada. It is primarily composed of methane gas, which is colourless, odourless, and tasteless. For safety purposes, a harmless chemical called Mercaptan is added to natural gas, giving it a pungent odour similar to rotten eggs, to help you detect leaks in your house or outside.

How is natural gas used?

Natural gas is used in a variety of ways, including heating homes and businesses, cooking, and powering vehicles. It is also used in the manufacturing of many everyday products, such as plastics and fertilizers. Natural gas is a reliable energy source that helps power our economy.

What is the role of a retailer in natural gas delivery?

Retailers purchase natural gas from the energy market and sell it to customers like you. They can offer competitive pricing and other benefits, such as fixed-rate plans. Contact local retailers to learn more about the natural gas options available in your area or visit the Utilities Consumer Advocate website at ucahelps.alberta.ca to choose the right provider for you. You can also call 310-4822 to get started.

Important natural gas safety concerns

Natural gas is a safe and reliable energy source when used properly. However, it is important to know how to detect gas leaks and what to do in case of an emergency. These are some tips to keep in mind:

1 | What to do when you smell gas:

If you smell gas or suspect a gas leak, leave the area immediately. Go to a neighbour's house and call ATCO Gas & Pipelines, 9-1-1 or your local fire department right away (day or night).

If indoors:

- DO NOT use matches or lighters and do not smoke
- DO NOT use your phone or cellular phone
- DO NOT turn light switches on or off
- DO NOT operate any electrical switches or appliances

If outdoors:

- KEEP EVERYONE OUT of the area
- DO NOT light any flames
- DO NOT start any motor vehicles near the source of the gas leak

What is the role of ATCO in natural gas delivery?

ATCO Gas & Pipelines is a natural gas transmission and distribution company. That means we own and operate a pipeline system that delivers natural gas to you.

Transmission pipelines are generally larger and deliver natural gas at a higher pressure. The natural gas then goes through stations on the system that reduces the gas pressure so it can flow through our distribution pipelines which connect to the meter at your home or business.

ATCO Gas & Pipelines provides natural gas services to over 1.1 million customers in almost 300 communities across Alberta. We help you with everything from having a new natural gas pipeline installed or moving or altering a meter or existing service line, to delivering innovative solutions to heat your home and water, to making sure your gas appliances are running smoothly. It is our responsibility to maintain pipelines and respond to emergencies.



2 | Tips on digging safely:

Natural gas pipelines run inside and outside your home. Whether you're renovating your home, building a fence, or doing any kind of digging in your yard, there are underground utility lines that you need to be aware of. Always get your underground utilities located before you start digging. Visit [ClickBeforeYouDig](#) - Submit a locate request for this free service.



If you hit an underground natural gas line, call our emergency line immediately at 1-800-511-3447.



3 | Tips to prevent and detect carbon monoxide in your home:

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an invisible, silent odourless toxic gas, often referred to as the 'silent killer'. In an enclosed space, such as a home or garage, CO exposure can lead to serious illness or death.



- Never idle a vehicle in the garage, even with the door open
- Have your furnace and natural gas appliances (such as your hot water heater, natural gas stove, etc.) checked regularly by a qualified technician, according to the manufacturer's specifications
- Never run exhaust fans, power attic vents or central vacuum systems for a long time
- Install and regularly test your CO detector

4 | Safety around uncapped gas lines:

Sometimes gas lines are not properly closed off. This happens when a natural gas appliance (like a dryer or stove) is replaced with an electric one or removed altogether – and the gas line is not properly capped or plugged. Uncapped lines and valves can be extremely dangerous as they can allow natural gas to leak in your home.

We encourage you to look behind your appliances and inspect your home for uncapped natural gas lines and valves.

Here's what to look for:



A dryer or a stove connector that is left behind

This highlighted piece is part of an appliance's connecting hose, yet it is often left on the natural gas line. If you spot this, the connector must be removed and the line must be properly sealed.



A properly sealed natural gas line

This threaded cap is one easy way to properly seal an uncapped natural gas line. Natural gas valves and fittings with an inside thread are sealed with a threaded plug. If you are not familiar with natural gas safety, please contact a qualified gas fitter or heating contractor to seal the line.

For natural gas emergencies, call the ATCO Gas & Pipelines 24-hour emergency phone number:

Edmonton and area 780-420-5585

Red Deer

403-357-5200

Calgary and area 403-245-7222

Other areas (toll free)

1-888-511-7550

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