Contact Information

Call Before You Dig: 1-800-474-6886
FortisBC Gas Emergency Notification Number: 1-800-663-9911
FortisBC Gas Emergency Operations Centre, Direct Line: 604-576-7163

Public Safety Manager: 604-592-8242
Emergency Planning Manager: 604-592-7494
Lands and ROW Information, Property Services Manager: 604-576-7088

Transmission Pipeline Emergencies

Gas pipeline leaks and other problems are rare, but the possibility still exists, whether by human error or as a result of a natural disaster.

Prevention: Call before you dig

The FortisBC pipeline system is dependable and safe. It represents little risk to local residents unless it is damaged. One of the greatest risks of accident is digging, excavation or drilling near a pipeline, without checking its location first with FortisBC.

BC One Call is a service for customers that's dedicated to minimizing the risk associated with accidents involving buried facilities. For your safety and the safety of others, contact BC One Call at 1-800-474-6886 (cellular *6886) before conducting any digging or drilling. Also, contact FortisBC if you see any suspected unauthorized activity near or on FortisBC right of ways (always clearly marked with a signpost).

Response

How to detect a gas leak from a pipeline by sight, smell or sound:

Sight - You may be able to see vapour in the air.

Smell - As a safety feature, Mercaptan is added to gas to give it a distinctive rotten egg smell.

Sound - You may be able to hear the hissing sound of gas leaking.

If there are signs of gas dissipating into the air:

DO:

- Turn off machinery and eliminate all sources of ignition.

- Shut off vehicle engines.
- Call FortisBC immediately.
- Evacuate the area, including buildings. Move people upwind if possible.
- Prevent vehicles and bystanders from entering the area.
- Call the fire department if there is a danger of fire.
- Avoid contact with any natural gas escaping from the pipeline.
- Warn people in nearby buildings, as gas might enter through drains if the break or leak is underground.

DO NOT:

- Turn electrical switches on or off.
- Operate any machinery, including vehicles.
- Attempt to make temporary repairs or operate any underground gas valves.

Distribution System (Utility Customers)

If you smell gas or hear the flow of escaping gas, follow these steps immediately:

- Don't smoke, light matches, operate electrical switches, use either cell phones or land lines, or create any other source of ignition.
- Leave the building or the area immediately; leaving the door open and any windows that may already be open.
- Get to a nearby phone and call the FortisBC 24-hour Emergency Line at
- 1-800-663-9911, or 911 or the fire department emergency number.

Incident Specific:

Earthquakes

BEFORE an earthquake

Secure the natural gas equipment in your home

- Securely strap your hot water tank. This is the most important preparation you can make, as it will keep the water line and gas line from breaking and ensure a source of water. You can do this very inexpensively.
- Anchor other gas appliances wherever possible. Use flexible metal connectors to connect appliances to rigid gas piping. Securing all your gas appliances properly reduces the need for a seismic shut-off valve.

AFTER an earthquake

- Check your natural gas appliances and equipment.
- **If you do not smell or hear gas escaping, consider leaving the gas on** to provide a source of energy for heat, hot water and cooking. Check the vents, chimney and connections at each gas appliance to be sure they have not been dislodged or blocked.
- **If you think you smell gas or hear gas escaping, act fast.**
  - Turn off your gas meter, if it's safe to do so, and
  - Leave the building and call **1-800-663-9911**

Floods

If you have enough advance warning prior to a flood, here's how to protect your appliances:

- Have a registered gas contractor remove the electric motor, burner and controls from your furnace, and shut off the gas and electric supply.
- Have the contractor remove hot water tanks, clothes dryers and ranges from your building.
- Have the contractor cap and properly seal the gas pipe leading to the appliance shut-off valve. This is to prevent the back flow of flood water into the gas piping system. If you have natural gas clothes dryers, ranges and other appliances removed, ensure the gas supply valve is shut off to the appliance first.

If you don't have enough time or a registered gas contractor is not available:

- Turn off electrical power to each appliance and leave it off. Shut off the gas supply valve to the appliance. Do not drain hot water tanks. Just shut off the water supply leading to and from the tank.

If you are evacuating your premises

Shut off your gas valve at the meter if you know how. You can turn your gas off at the main shut-off valve on the inlet pipe next to your gas meter. Using a wrench or other suitable tool, give the valve a quarter turn in either direction so that it is crosswise to the pipe.

After a flood

Floodwater may have shifted your home or caused other stresses to the gas piping.

All electrical wiring in buildings that has been partially or fully covered by flood water must be checked by a qualified electrician or electrical inspector before being put into service again. Any loose wires should be considered "live" and a definite hazard.

If you find one of the following when you return home, have FortisBC inspect your meter and regulator before using your natural gas system:

- Your gas meter has been covered with flood waters.
- A red outage tag is hanging from your meter.
- A red outage tag is hanging from your front door.

The number to call is 1-877-711-8877.

After FortisBC completes its inspection of your meter and regulator, call a registered gas contractor to inspect and reconnect your natural gas appliances.

CAUTION: If you smell gas, or if there is evidence of a gas leak, don't enter the building. Call our 24-hour emergency line at **1-800-663-9911**, your local fire department or **911**.

Forest fires and evacuation alerts

Natural gas service outages

If fire or emergency officials request FortisBC to do so, we will turn off natural gas service as a precautionary measure, or if there is an immediate threat to FortisBC infrastructure. Once fire or emergency officials confirm the situation is safe, there are a number of steps that FortisBC takes to safely restore natural gas service:

- assess the natural gas system in the affected area, repair any damage and reactivate the affected system
- visit each home to relight all affected appliances and restore gas service at the meter, if required
- if you are not at home, a FortisBC technician will leave a door tag that provides contact information. Call **1-877-711-8877** for relights.

What to do when you return home

The decision to lift the evacuation order is made by local fire officials after consultation with other agencies, including FortisBC. Once the order is lifted, customers will be able to return to their homes.

- If gas has been turned off due to an emergency, FortisBC will first ensure the natural gas system is safe. Once complete, FortisBC crews will visit your home to relight your appliances.
- If the service valve on your meter is turned to the off position, do not turn it on. If you have concerns with the natural gas system, or if you detect the rotten egg or sulphur smell of natural gas, leave your home immediately and call the FortisBC 24-hour emergency number at **1-800-663-9911**.

Always call a registered gas contractor

Don't try to put natural gas appliances back in service yourself. Do not use any gas appliances that have been damaged, until they have been thoroughly inspected by a registered gas contractor.

The contractor will check, repair and pressure test all gas pipes that may have been affected by the forest fire. They will also check that all your gas equipment is safe to operate.