

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MD. FIRE / EMS DEPARTMENT

TIPsheet

WHAT IF YOU SMELL NATURAL GAS!



NEED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION? PLEASE CONTACT THE
PGFD/EMS COMMUNITY OUTREACH OFFICE AT 301-883-5250



WHAT TO DO IF YOU SMELL NATURAL GAS

*This information is presented as a cooperative effort between the Prince George's County, Maryland Fire/EMS Department and Washington Gas. If an emergency happens and you are unsure what to do, **CALL 9-1-1 IMMEDIATELY***

THE THREE STEPS TO DEALING WITH A NATURAL GAS LEAK

STEP 1: RECOGNIZE

*Natural gas is non-toxic, colorless, tasteless and odorless. For your safety, Washington Gas adds an unpleasant odorant called mercaptan to natural gas so you will be able to detect escaping gas. To help you recognize the smell of natural gas, call the company at 703-750-1000 for a free copy of *Understanding Natural Gas*, a bilingual (English-Spanish) brochure that provides an odor sample and other important safety information.*

STEP 2: REACT

If you smell natural gas, call the Washington Gas Emergency Leak Line at 703-750-1400 or 1-800-752-7520 outside the local calling area. Do not attempt to locate the source of the odor. If the odor is very strong or you hear a blowing or hissing noise, vacate the building immediately, leaving doors unlocked as you go. Do nothing that could create an ignition source — do not light a match, use any type of phone or battery-powered equipment, turn electrical equipment or light switches on or off, or start your car. Call 911 and the appropriate Washington Gas emergency numbers as instructed above only after you have reached a safe distance away from the building. Follow the same precautions if you are outside and smell gas, hear hissing or blowing noises, or see dirt being thrown into the air. Washington Gas distributes natural gas through a network of underground pipes and service lines. If a leak should occur, it is possible for gas to migrate into buildings, including those without natural gas service.

STEP 3: RESPOND

Highly-trained emergency personnel respond to the scene — 24 hours a day, 7 days a week — when notified of a natural gas leak. If a leak poses an immediate threat, quick action is taken to make the area safe. If a natural gas leak does not pose an immediate threat, Washington Gas schedules other corrective action for a later date. This prioritization process helps Washington Gas ensure the safety of all its customers while allocating resources more efficiently; coordinating necessary work with customers' schedules; and minimizing traffic disruptions.