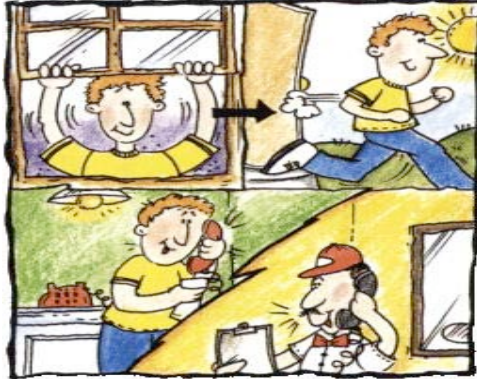


## ***SAFETY AND MAINTENANCE TIPS FOR NATURAL GAS USERS FROM THE VILLAGE OF DIVERNON***

Natural gas is one of the safest fuels. Composed mostly of methane, it is naturally colorless and odorless. For safety's sake, an odor is added – a smell much like rotten eggs or sulfur – so you can easily detect it. When natural gas leaks it will mix with air and can cause a fire if there is a source of ignition (or explosion if it accumulates in a confined space). Natural gas is not poisonous but can cause unconsciousness in high concentrations when it displaces air.

The Divernon Gas Department is concerned about our customers' safety. It is important if you smell gas to remember the following:



Leave the building immediately; leaving the door open and any windows that may already be open.

Do not smoke, use lighters or matches, turn on or off use the telephone or a cellular phone inside or near the door or use anything electrical that could create a source of ignition.

*Get to a nearby phone and call the Divernon Gas Department at 217-628-3416. Business hours are 8:00 am-noon 1:00 pm-5:00 pm Monday-Friday or call 911.*

### **Maintaining your heating system**

To keep your heating system in proper working condition, have your furnace inspected annually – ideally before the heating season begins. Call a qualified technician to schedule an inspection in late summer or early fall. For safety reasons, never make your own repairs on heating equipment or other natural gas appliances.

Here are some tasks you may be able to perform. For activities involving direct contact with your heating system, please remember to turn off the electrical power beforehand.



Clean or replace furnace air filters monthly. Dirty filters block Airflow and cause the furnace to work harder.

Remove dust and lint from your furnace burner compartment at least once a year.

Check chimney for obstructions. Make sure your chimney is not blocked by debris. Consider having a professional chimney sweeper inspect and clean your chimney. Obstructions can prevent the flue gases from venting properly.

Inspect the flue pipes from the heating system and water heater to make sure they are free of rust and tightly sealed. Do not attempt to patch openings. Call a licensed technician to have a new vent pipe installed immediately.

Check ductwork for air leaks, especially at joints. Repair air leaks. Add insulation to ductwork in unheated areas, such as basements and crawl spaces. Wrap batt insulation around the ducts and seal with duct tape.

## Maintenance and safety tips for your natural gas appliances.

Regular maintenance ensures your safety and helps keep your natural gas appliances operating at their best. Refer to manuals provided with your appliances. You can take care of much of this maintenance by yourself if you choose, but a qualified gas technician should inspect and service your gas appliances on a regular basis.

When selecting a qualified gas technician, make sure that personnel are licensed gas fitters and experienced at inspecting all types of natural gas appliances for safe operation. Be sure to ask if they know how to check heat exchangers. Firms that are solely in the furnace installation or cleaning businesses may not be qualified to perform this inspection.

Your appliances are designed for years of trouble-free use. To ensure your safety it is important to know the warning signs that might indicate a problem with your appliance. Common warning signs are:



- Pilot light outages
- Delayed ignition (slow to start)
- An all-yellow flame, or a change in the appearance of the flame
- Any continuous or intermittent odor – either the rotten egg smell or a sharp odor that may cause the eyes to burn
- Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning
- Booming noises upon ignition
- Excessive soot or corrosion on the appliance or vent system

If you notice any of these signs, stop using the appliance, turn off the gas supply to the appliance only (do not turn the gas off at the meter); report the malfunction to a qualified gas technician immediately.

Here are a few safety tips to remember to use around your natural gas appliances:



- Make sure the area around gas appliances and vent pipes are kept clear of combustible materials like paper, paints, solvents and propane cylinders.
- Gas appliances have open flames and can be a source of ignition. Do not use combustible products such as solvents and glue in the area.
- Make sure there is an adequate supply of air to gas appliances. Do not block off the duct bringing in outside air and check with your gas department or heating technician before enclosing appliances.
- Know where to find the gas shut-off valve for each appliance, and how to use it-the gas is off when the valve handle is at a right angle to the gas pipe.

## **Carbon Monoxide (CO)**

Carbon Monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that is produced when fuels, such as coal, gasoline, kerosene, oil, wood, propane and natural gas burn without complete combustion. When CO is present, it rapidly robs the body of oxygen.

Exposure to carbon monoxide causes flu-like symptoms like headaches, nausea, drowsiness and the loss of muscle control. While the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning from regularly maintained or properly functioning natural gas appliances is extremely low, you should be aware of its symptoms. If you suspect the presence of carbon monoxide, get everyone to fresh air immediately. Open doors and windows to air out the room or building and turn off suspect appliance. If you experience physical symptoms, seek medical advice.

Divernon Gas Department does not offer (CO) testing, this is an appliance problem, if you experience any of the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning call a licensed technician immediately to have your appliances checked.

To help protect yourself and your family from carbon monoxide poisoning here are a few safety tips:

- Make sure your gas appliances are properly installed, vented and maintained.
- A qualified technician should check your furnace and other fuel burning appliances annually.
- Metal flues and vents should be inspected for rust and cracking. Do not attempt to repair yourself; have a qualified technician do repairs for you.
- Make sure your chimney is not blocked by debris. Obstructions can prevent flue gases from venting properly.
- Keep the area around your heating equipment clean and unblocked to allow proper airflow.
- Don't use your gas range to heat your home.
- Don't operate a vehicle, lawn mower or grill in your closed garage or use an outside grill in your home.
- Don't operate a generator inside your home, garage, or any enclosed areas.
- Don't sleep in a room with an unvented gas or kerosene space heater.
- Don't use a wood-burning fireplace and furnace simultaneously for long periods of time.

## Your natural gas meter—what you should know about it.

Your natural gas meter measures the amount of natural gas you use. It's also the point at which natural gas enters your home or business. To ensure your meter is accuracy, accessibility and your safety, it is important not to damage your meter.



Be sure your meter is accessible – don't enclose it in an building, deck or surround it with shrubs.

Don't attach anything to your meter – dogs on leashes, clotheslines, etc.

Don't store or lean materials against your gas meter or piping.

Dig by hand when landscaping near your pipe connection, and keep the area near your meter free of landscaping. If you damage your natural gas pipeline or meter you may be responsible for the cost of repairs.



Keep your meter clear of snow and ice. Don't shovel snow up against the gas meter. Accumulated snow and ice places stress on your meter and piping. Damage to the piping can cause a gas leak. Blocked regulator vents can dangerously over-pressure the system, affecting appliance operation and interrupt service.

Keep gutters clear and in good repair so that water does not drip on the meter and cause ice build-up on your gas meter and pipin

Divernon Gas Department has a network of underground pipelines that carry natural gas from production to homes and businesses. These lines are buried and out of sight, so it's easy to forget about them.



Sometimes pipelines are marked by aboveground markers, such as the ones shown here, but often they are not. Divernon uses these markers to indicate approximate, but not exact locations of our pipeline.

There are also natural gas service lines buried on private property, which supply gas to homes and businesses. The use of sharp tools can damage the lines, causing injury or loss of service.

## Call Before You Dig!!

Don't forget that an underground gas pipeline could be in the vicinity of where you want to dig. If you're planning a renovation or landscaping project give us two working days notice and we'll mark the location of our underground gas pipeline. CALL JULIE AT 1-800-892-0123 or visit their website at [www.illinois1call.com](http://www.illinois1call.com).

We use two methods of marking paint or flags often we are asked what the different colors stand for:

Yellow-gas, oil, petroleum

Green-sewer

Red-electric

Purple-reclaimed water

Orange-communication, telephone, tv

White-proposed excavation

Blue-water

Pink-Temporary survey markings

Please remind children not to remove the colorful flags used to mark underground utilities. If a child does pull out the utility flags, do not attempt to place the flags back in the ground. CALL JULIE AT 1-800-892-0123 to indicate the utility lines need to be marked again.