

# Natural Gas Pipeline and Public Safety

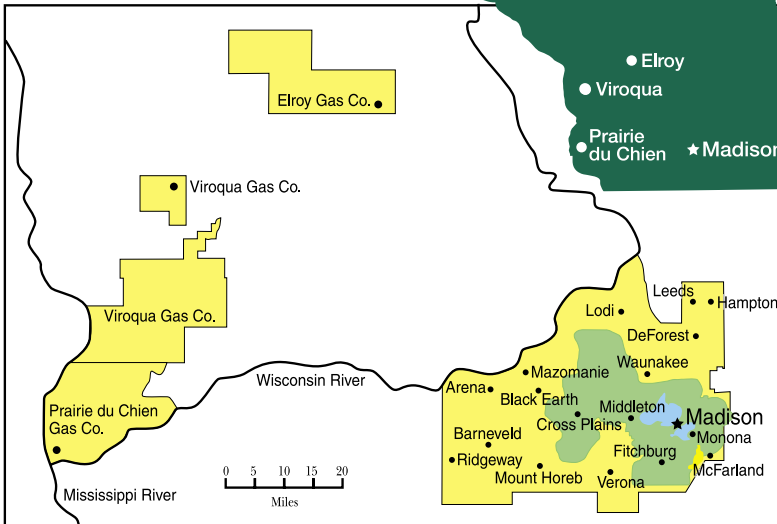


# Telephone numbers

Madison Gas and Electric (MGE) and its area division employees are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to assist in handling emergencies. They may be reached through the phone numbers listed below.

**Gas Emergency Phone Numbers:  
608-252-1111 or 1-800-245-1123**

The area we serve



■ Gas/Electric Service    ■ Gas Service

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## Keeping your community safe

You have an important role in preventing natural gas emergencies and keeping your community safe. We want to help you understand the preventive steps we take to protect those living and working near our facilities.



Natural gas comes into homes and businesses in your community through a vast network of underground pipelines. Not only is natural gas a clean, efficient and convenient

energy source, the pipelines used to transport it have exceptional safety records. However, natural gas can be dangerous when not properly controlled. It's important to understand MGE's role in pipeline maintenance, inspection and emergency response.

## Safety and reliability come first

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration requires natural gas pipeline operators to develop and implement integrity management programs. Our integrity management programs provide a process for inspecting and assessing the condition of natural gas pipelines



and establishing a maintenance program based on best industry practices. We:

- Design our system to ensure the safe delivery of natural gas.
- Mark and map our distribution facilities.
- Periodically inspect our system.
- Promptly address potential hazards before they become a problem.
- Ensure our workforce is trained and qualified.
- Work with public officials, emergency responders, contractors and excavators to prepare for emergencies and establish channels of communication.
- Provide training and educational materials about safe digging practices to contractors and excavators.
- Provide educational materials to the public about how to prevent, recognize and respond to natural gas leaks.

## **Partnering with emergency officials/responders**

MGE works with local emergency officials to respond to incidents involving natural gas pipelines. We have employees on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It's extremely important that emergency responders allow them on the scene of the incident. Our employees are specially trained to operate utility equipment and help make the situation safe.

We also provide training and information about emergency response protocol to police, fire and emergency organizations. Contact MGE for more information.

For access to online training, visit <https://wua.rtueonline.com>.

## Establishing safe land use/development near pipelines

Because damage from digging is the most common cause of underground natural gas leaks, local officials can help keep their communities safe by establishing guidelines for construction near natural gas pipelines. Suggested guidelines include:



- Establishing set-back requirements for new construction and development near pipelines.
- Requiring the consent of easement holders as a condition of issuing permits for construction or development that may impact the safe operation of pipelines.
- Requiring our involvement during the early planning stages for road widening or grading, mining, blasting, dredging or other excavation activities that may impact the safe operation of the pipeline.
- Requiring residents, excavators and land developers to contact Diggers Hotline ([diggershotline.com](http://diggershotline.com)) regarding questions about pipeline location.

## What every community member should know

Damage from digging is the most common cause of underground natural gas leaks. Encourage all residents and contractors to “call before they dig” whenever they plan to landscape, install a fence or build a deck. It’s state law.

Knowing where buried natural gas pipelines are located before residents or contractors begin a digging project is the best way to avoid being injured and disrupting utility service in your community. The depth of natural gas pipelines varies, and there may be other utilities (telecommunications, sewers and drain lines, etc.) in the same area.

## Call 811 before you dig; it's the law.



One easy phone call to 811 instantly begins the process of getting underground utilities marked on residential, public or commercial property. The utilities are marked within three business days. This service is free.

You also can contact Diggers Hotline at 1-800-242-8511 or online at [diggershotline.com](http://diggershotline.com).



## Natural gas leaks – use your eyes, ears and nose

Although natural gas leaks are rare, they do occur. Use your eyes, ears and nose, and call MGE about any of these warning signs:

- Unexplained dead or dying grass or other vegetation near a pipeline; dirt or debris blowing into the air; or water bubbling in a puddle, river, pond or creek.
- Unusual hissing, whistling or roaring sound.

- Unusual odor like rotten eggs. Natural gas is odorless and tasteless, so we add an odorant to the gas in our distribution system. This makes leaks easier to detect. Most transmission pipelines ARE NOT odorized. That's why it's important to look for and report any of the other warning signs listed above.



If residents or contractors notice any of the above warning signs:

- Leave the area immediately.
- Don't stop to open windows.
- Don't touch anything that might create a spark, such as a light switch, telephone, cell phone or garage door opener. If possible, stay away from carpeted areas to avoid sparks from static electricity.
- Call MGE from a remote location, and a natural gas technician or crew will investigate the situation.
- If natural gas is blowing outside or inside, call 911 immediately.

## Farm safety



If farming activities in your community include deep plowing, fence post installation, trenching, leveling, tilling, subsoiling or other excavation work, it's especially important to call Diggers Hotline at 811 before work begins.



## Location of natural gas pipelines

Gas lines are common in town. They run along streets and through yards. It's likely that many people in your community work or live near natural gas pipelines. Since pipelines are buried underground, markers are used to show the approximate location – particularly in rural areas.

The color, size and design may vary, but all markers must display the following:



- Material transported in the pipeline,
- Name of the pipeline operator and
- Operator's telephone number in case of emergency.

Markers may be anywhere along the pipeline right-of-way, which typically runs along a public street but may also be on or near private property. The owner of the pipeline has the right to restrict certain activities in the pipeline right-of-way so they can access the area in an emergency or for maintenance.

For public safety, the following general guidelines should be observed:

- No structures, such as buildings, sheds and swimming pools, should be located over gas mains or services.
- No trees or shrubs should be planted over gas mains or services or restrict access to metering.
- No blasting should be conducted over gas mains or services.

## National Pipeline Mapping System

You can find out more about interstate and intrastate natural gas transmission pipelines in your community via the National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS).

Since 2002, transmission pipeline operators are required to submit mapping information to the NPMS and provide annual updates. To find out who operates pipelines in your area, contact the NPMS at *[npms.phmsa.dot.gov](http://npms.phmsa.dot.gov)*.

# Listening. Learning.

MGE takes responsibility to provide information and education to serve our customers and stakeholders. We educate customers today to help inform their decision-making. We educate tomorrow's stakeholders so they can help plan our energy future.

We're here to help you with any questions you have about natural gas safety. If any situation occurs in your community that involves natural gas, please contact MGE immediately.

*By working together, we can keep our communities safe.*

If you have questions about natural gas safety, please call 608-252-7222.

If you have a natural gas emergency, please call:

- 911
- Gas Emergency Number: 608-252-1111 or 1-800-245-1123

Lights out/other emergencies:

- 608-252-7111 or 1-800-245-1123
- Get more energy information at *mge.com*

Billing and general information:

- 608-252-7222 or 1-800-245-1125
- Home Energy Line: 608-252-7117
- Business Help Line: 608-252-7007



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