

# City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities

# Natural Gas Safety

Winter 2026

**Important Information from Richmond Gas Works Serving Richmond, Henrico and North Chesterfield**

## Prevent Damage to Underground Natural Gas Lines

The greatest risk to underground pipelines is accidental damage during excavation. To protect our natural gas pipelines and other underground facilities, it is critical that you use the Va811system prior to ANY excavation on public or private property.

The law requires that ALL excavators call 811 or submit a request online at [va811.com](http://va811.com) before digging.

Virginia 811 will contact the owners of all underground facilities and pipelines so that they can mark the locations for you. Excavators are required to allow time for utilities to mark their lines and are required to take precautions when working in the area.

Even if you cause seemingly minor damage to a gas line or meter, notify Richmond Gas Works immediately at 646-4646. Any damage may cause a future leak or failure.

## If You Detect Even a Faint Scent of Gas

A gas leak is usually recognized by the smell, sight or sound.

**Smell** - Natural gas is colorless and odorless. We add a distinctive, pungent odor similar to rotten eggs so that you will recognize it quickly.

**Sight** - You may see mist, fog or bubbles in standing water, or vegetation that appears to be dead or dying for no apparent reason.

**Sound** - You may hear an unusual noise like roaring, hissing or whistling.

### What should you do if you suspect a leak?

- Protect life first. Move to a safe environment.
- Call 911.
- Do not strike a match, use telephones, turn on or off appliances, lights or even a flashlight in the area where you smell gas. These items can produce sparks that might ignite and cause an explosion.

***Richmond Gas Works is specially equipped to locate gas leaks.  
We'll send someone right away to ensure your safety.***

When underground utility lines are marked, the colors indicate the type of line.

 **Red** - Electric power, cables, conduit and lightning cables

 **Yellow** - Gas, oil, steam, petroleum or gaseous materials

 **Orange** - Communications, alarm or signal lines, cables or conduits

 **Blue** - Potable water

 **Purple** - Reclaimed water, irrigation and slurry lines

 **Green** - Sewer and drain lines

 **Pink** - Temporary survey markings

 **White** - Proposed excavation



## More Information

 Call 811 or 800-552-7001  
before you dig



[richmondgasworks.com](http://richmondgasworks.com)



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Office of Pipeline Safety  
[www.phmsa.gov](http://www.phmsa.gov)



[facebook.com/RichmondGasWorks](http://facebook.com/RichmondGasWorks)

 [va811.com](http://va811.com)  
 [rva.gov/public-utilities/natural-gas-utility](http://rva.gov/public-utilities/natural-gas-utility)

# Pipeline Locations

Natural gas is drawn from inside the earth and fed into large transmission pipelines that crisscross the nation.

Once the gas arrives in Virginia, Richmond Gas Works distributes it through underground pipelines safely and reliably to its customers. Since these pipelines are underground, line markers are sometimes used whenever possible to approximate their location along a route. These markers display the material transported (yellow means natural gas), the name of the pipeline owner, and telephone number of the owner in the event of an emergency or damaged pipeline.

These markers only indicate the general location of the pipeline and cannot be relied upon to indicate the exact location. Because many of these distribution lines are not marked, it is critical that people use the 811 call line prior to ANY excavation. When excavation work is planned, the natural gas pipelines are identified with yellow paint markings or flags.

## Hazard Awareness and Prevention

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, natural gas transmission and distribution systems have the best safety record of any type of transportation system in the country. Like all forms of energy, however, it must be handled properly. Damage to an underground pipeline can cause natural gas to escape, which could cause a hazard. We work diligently to ensure pipeline safety through a variety of measures, including:

- One-call and Dig Safe programs (VA 811)
- Inspection programs
- Design and construction practices
- Workforce qualification programs
- Public education programs
- Industry safety practices and government oversight
- Pipeline markers and facility mapping
- Natural gas leak surveys
- Patrol of critical natural gas facilities
- Natural gas pressure monitoring
- Natural gas odorization
- Liaison with city, county and municipal agencies
- Security measures

## Yellow CSST Safety Campaign and Precautions

Do you have CSST piping installed in your home or business? This gas fuel piping product, called corrugated stainless steel tubing or CSST, should be properly bonded and grounded to current requirements in order to reduce the risk to your home or business from lightning activity. The American Public Gas Association, partnering with the National Association of State Fire Marshals, wants you to be safe.

### What is CSST?

Corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST) is a flexible, stainless steel piping system used to supply natural gas and propane in residential, commercial and industrial structures. Standard CSST is coated with a yellow exterior plastic coating.

CSST has been safely used in homes and business since 1990 and is an effective means of delivering natural gas and propane gas. CSST typically has 75 percent fewer fittings than traditional pipe, which means a safer system, less leak potential and reduced callbacks.

### Why am I being contacted?

If lightning strikes on or near a structure, there is risk it can travel through the structure's gas piping system and cause a leak, and in some cases a fire.

All manufacturer's instructions have required direct-bonding and grounding of yellow CSST in new installations since 2006. A bonding connection installed on a gas piping system, as with any metallic system within a house, will reduce the likelihood of electrical arcing to or from other bonded metallic systems in the structure, thus reducing the likelihood of arc induced damage.

### What should I do if I find CSST?

#### 1. Inspect

If work has been performed on the gas piping system in your house or business since 1990, it's possible that yellow CSST was installed but not to current installation requirements.

#### 2. Mitigate

If you find yellow CSST, it is strongly recommended that you contact a licensed electrician. The licensed electrician can ensure that your system is properly bonded.

For more information concerning the safety of CSST go to [CSSTSafety.com](http://CSSTSafety.com)



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**PUBLIC UTILITIES**