

TOOLBOX TALKS

Steps To Take If You Break Natural Gas, Petroleum, or Propane Lines

(Portions excerpted with permission from the Excavator Manual published by Dig Safe System Inc. and available in full at www.digsafe.com)

Company Name _____

Date _____

Presenter Name _____

Job Site/Project _____

Despite taking every effort to prevent underground utility damages, sometimes accidents happen. All damages must be reported immediately to the utility operator. In the case of a natural gas, petroleum, or propane line, extra steps should be taken to secure the job site and protect worker and public safety and property.

- Any damage including scrapes, scratches, nicks, or dents must be reported to the facility operator immediately. Even if there is no apparent damage, don't assume the damage occurred only at the point of contact. Left unchecked these types of damages can corrode overtime with catastrophic results.
- Natural gas is non-toxic however it will displace air in confined spaces and can cause asphyxiation. The risks posed by a gas damage or leak include: fire; explosion; and asphyxiation.
- Natural gas and propane are not the same thing. Natural gas is lighter than air and will rise and diffuse rapidly in open air, in enclosed spaces natural gas will displace the air near the ceiling first. Propane is heavier than air and will sink and fill excavation holes, basements, and other cavities.
- Both propane and natural gas will take the path of least resistance. Field conditions, such as a frost cap on the ground surface in the winter, may cause leaking gas to move beyond the immediate area and into sewers, phone ducts and other locations.
- Signs of a natural gas leak include: rotten egg smell; blowing or hissing sound; dead or discolored vegetation in an otherwise green area; dirt or dust blowing from a hole in the ground; bubbling in wet or flooded areas; or flames.

If you break a gas line....

- Stop work immediately and evacuate the site. If you suspect gas may be flowing into surrounding structures evacuate them immediately.
- Call 911.
- Notify the facility operator of the damage.

