



Natural Gas and Electric Safety Guide



We just want
you to be safe.

Customer Service 800-227-9187



Know the smell
of natural gas.

Scratch
&
Sniff

Natural gas is colorless and odorless, Avista adds
Mercaptan to give it a rotten egg odor.

Gas safety

Avista's natural gas system

It takes a large system of underground pipelines to bring natural gas right to your home or business. Federal and state codes extensively regulate natural gas pipelines for public safety. At Avista, we do our part by routinely monitoring and maintaining our natural gas facilities to ensure safety.



How we keep our system safe

To keep our natural gas system safe, Avista completes regular maintenance. We perform several procedures including leak survey, pipeline patrolling, meter inspection and periodic meter change-out to name a few. So please know that, from time to time, you may see one of our workers in your yard.

Recognizing a gas leak

Natural gas leaks don't happen often but can be dangerous. Colorless, odorless and lighter than air, natural gas can become combustible when mixed with air and exposed to an ignition source. Fortunately, staying safe is as easy as using your nose, ears and eyes.



We add a sulfur-like rotten egg stench, so you'll know right away if there's a problem.



Gas can hiss or even roar as it escapes from pipes.



Gas may make bubbles, blow dirt and/or kill plants when leaking from underground pipes.

If you notice a natural gas leak

- Leave the area by going upwind.
- If you're indoors, get outside fast.
- Do not use a phone, flip a switch or do anything that may cause a spark.
- At a neighbor's house or from a safe distance, call 911 and Avista Customer Service at **800-227-9187**.

Carbon monoxide (CO)

Natural gas is non-toxic and is a clean burning fossil fuel. When burned under normal operating conditions, natural gas produces clean heat, carbon dioxide and water vapor. But if natural gas isn't burned properly, it can emit carbon monoxide, which is potentially hazardous.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless and deadly gas produced when the combustion of any fuel, such as natural gas, takes place without sufficient oxygen.

CO poisoning may cause:

- headache
- nausea
- fatigue
- dizziness
- shortness of breath
- death



To alert your family when CO is present, buy a UL-listed carbon monoxide detector and install it according to manufacturer's instructions.

Preventing CO poisoning

Malfunctioning appliances are often the cause of carbon monoxide poisoning, so ask a qualified technician to service your heating system, water heater and other gas, oil, wood or coal-burning heaters and appliances periodically. Ensure there is adequate ventilation, too.

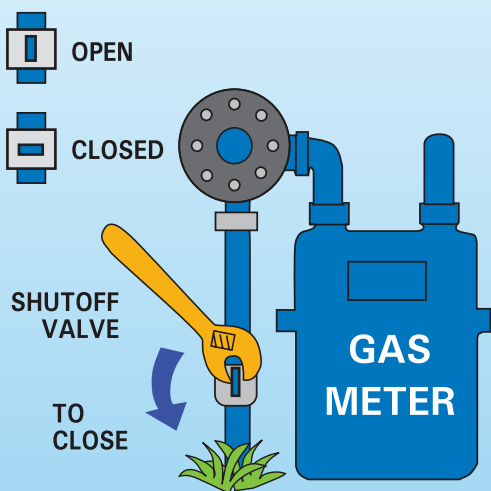
Responding to an outdoor natural gas leak

Puncturing a natural gas line could injure and/or kill you and others. If a line is severed and gas is escaping, follow these guidelines:

- Avoid any action that may create a spark.
- Do NOT start vehicles, flip switches on or off, or make and hang up calls near the area.
- Do not attempt to crimp or bend the pipe (static electricity is present).
- Do NOT attempt to shut off any pipeline valves.
- Evacuate the area on foot (upwind and uphill).
- Alert others to evacuate and keep people away.
- Call 911 from a safe distance to report the emergency.
- Call and report the event to Avista.
- Wait for emergency responders and Avista to arrive.

Natural disasters

In major emergencies, such as an earthquake or flood, you should know how to shut off your home's natural gas service. Using a large wrench, give the valve on the meter a quarter turn in either direction. When the valve runs crossways to the pipe, the line is closed. Only turn off your gas if you smell or hear a gas leak, or if your residence sustains major damage. **Also, never turn the gas back on yourself.** Let trained personnel handle it. Avista will implement our emergency plan to ensure the safety of affected areas. If a storm exposes your natural gas lines due to flooding or high winds (e.g. when a tree is ripped up by the roots), please contact Avista. We just want you to be safe.



Natural gas safety check list

To help prevent accidents in your home and keep your family safe, follow these general tips:

Indoors

- ☐ Have a qualified technician periodically inspect your natural gas appliances to ensure they are operating correctly and are properly vented.
- ☐ Clean the area around your furnace and water heater so it is free of litter.
- ☐ Remove all combustible liquids and materials that are stored near gas appliances.
- ☐ Instruct children to stay away from gas range/gas-burning appliances and to not swing from gas lines or play on meters.
- ☐ Clean your natural gas range and oven to avoid grease fires.
- ☐ Purchase carbon monoxide detectors for every floor and install according to manufacturer's directions.

Outdoors

- ☐ Keep dirt or debris from collecting under or around your gas meter to prevent corrosion and leaks.
- ☐ Clear away snow and ice from the meter during winter months.
- ☐ Make sure no objects are placed on or against the meter. (No animals should be tied to it either.)
- ☐ Make sure your meter is protected from possible collision with vehicles.
- ☐ Call 811 **at least two business days** before you dig to have underground utilities marked (free service for Avista residential customers). Privately owned lines can be located for a fee.
- ☐ Call Avista before you or a professional attempt to unblock a sewer drain.
- ☐ Identify the gas valve on your gas meter in the event you need to shut off your natural gas during a major emergency. (Make sure you keep a large enough wrench at home.)



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

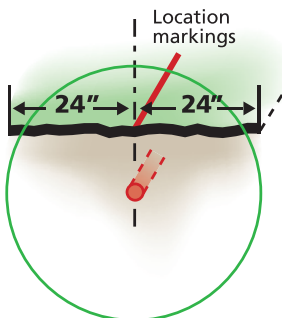
Call 811 before you dig

Before you break ground with a shovel, auger or other equipment, call 811 at least **two business days** before you dig—it's the law. A utility representative will come mark the approximate location of your buried utility lines. The service is free for Avista residential customers. Privately-owned lines can be located for a fee.

Call 811 before you dig checklist

Never disturb the ground until you complete these steps:

- ☐ Use white paint to mark the zone where you plan to dig. (Use pink paint if the area is covered by snow.)
- ☐ Call 811 and wait for all utility representatives listed on your locate ticket to mark their facilities.
- ☐ Maintain and respect these locate marks/flags (See below: If your locate ticket expires, you must call in for a new locate.)
- ☐ Hand dig within the 24-inch tolerance zone to expose the marked/flagged utility (see graphic depiction).





Ground mark identification

Ground markings are in different colors to indicate the approximate locations and types of utility facilities buried below. Valid timeframes for locate tickets:

WA - 45 days

ID - 21 days

OR - 45 days

If anyone digs after the listed times, they are digging with an expired ticket.

ELECTRIC: RED

GAS-OIL: YELLOW

COMMUNICATION: ORANGE

WATER: BLUE

SEWER: GREEN

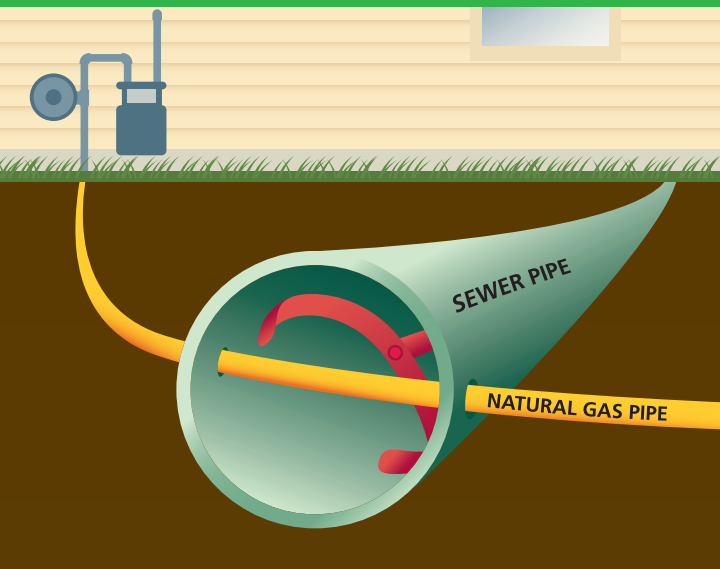
TEMPORARY SURVEY: PINK

IRRIGATION: PURPLE

PROPOSED EXCAVATION: WHITE

If you damage a line

- If you hit or nick an electric or natural gas line, immediately notify Avista customer service at **800-227-9187**.
- If you damage a pipeline and natural gas is escaping, **DO NOT FOLD OVER THE PIPE** to stop the leak. This can cause a static charge that can ignite the gas. Walk upwind a safe distance away, then call 911 and Avista.



Unblocking a sewer

On rare occasions, buried natural gas lines have unintentionally been installed through undetected sewer pipes. These natural gas lines are safe unless severed by a sewer-clearing tool, which could cause a gas leak and lead to a fire or explosion. Before clearing a blocked sewer, call Avista. We'll send out a technician at no cost to make sure it's safe.

Excess flow valve

An excess flow valve (EFV) is a device that automatically restricts the flow of natural gas if an underground pipeline is punctured or severed from excavation. EFVs have been installed on most new and replaced natural gas customer services since 2008. Existing natural gas customers without an EFV on their natural gas service may elect to have one installed at the customer's expense. For more information, visit myavista.com/resnsgsafety.

Never build over gas and electric lines

Never build any type of structure over buried utility lines or where it will block access to meters. Doing so runs a serious safety risk and prevents Avista from maintaining the infrastructure that serves customers.

General pipeline markers (Not a substitute for calling 811)

Some of Avista's major distribution pipelines for natural gas have aboveground yellow markers along their routes, each displaying a 24-hour emergency response phone number. THESE YELLOW MARKERS ONLY INDICATE THE PRESENCE OF BURIED NATURAL GAS LINES and may not be posted above the actual pipelines. You are still required by law to have pipelines located and marked by calling 811 at least two business days before you dig. Transmission pipeline maps by county and zip code that show the names of pipeline operators are available by registering at <https://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov>.



Electric safety

Avista's Washington and Idaho electric system

Avista operates more than 21,000 miles of transmission and distribution lines for electricity—some visible up on utility poles, others buried underground. For reliability and public safety, Avista routinely monitors and maintains these lines, substations and other electric equipment to meet extensive federal and state regulations.

Power lines fire prevention

Avista takes a number of proactive steps to help minimize the risk of possible fires associated with power lines:

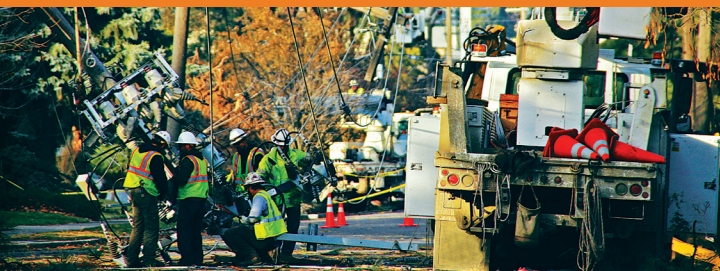
- Crews are on stand-by to respond to fire situations and outages, and we can identify additional crews when a situation requires assistance.
- We have an on-going vegetation management program to help keep vegetation from coming into contact with energized power lines. It is important that property owners partner in this effort so that only correct size trees are planted under our power lines. Tree size information is available by contacting Avista at **800-227-9187** or by contacting a certified arborist.
- We strategically place steel power poles in certain areas with the potential for fires, such as national forests, to help avoid outages from fire damage.
- We temporarily change how we handle power outages in rural and forested areas when the region is very dry. In the event of an outage, we send out personnel to physically inspect lines before placing them back in service. This requires more time to restore service but decreases potential fire danger. We return to normal operations as soon as dry conditions change.

It's important to note that these steps cannot guarantee eliminating a fire.

Wildfire season readiness

Avista closely monitors wildfires and can respond to any situation that may threaten the transmission and distribution lines that deliver service to our customers. We de-energize power lines at the request of emergency responders to protect firefighters and prevent additional fires.

If you do experience a fire-related outage, power restoration will depend on when fire officials allow our crews to enter the fire zone and begin work.



Look up and be safe

When working or playing outdoors, always be mindful of overhead power lines. You could easily come in contact with a line and be electrocuted by carrying a ladder, working on the roof or trimming trees. Long-handled tools used for cleaning the pool could touch a power line, too. Kids also need to watch out for power lines when climbing trees, flying kites and playing with water blasters/soakers. Anyone flying a drone should be careful, as well.

Downed power lines

Should you ever come across a downed powerline (often knocked down by trees and branches during windstorms), get back and stay back. You should:

- Always assume the downed line is “hot” or energized.
- Never touch or move a downed line.
- Don’t try to move a person or object touching a downed line or you also may end up a victim.
- Move back as far away as possible. (Even the ground around a downed line can be dangerous.)
- Avoid fences and other nearby objects, as they may be electrified when a power line falls on them.
- Keep others away and call Avista immediately.

Vehicle entrapment

If a power line falls on your vehicle, stay inside. If others approach or attempt to help, remind them to stay away. Only if a fire or smoke forces you to leave should you get out. However, never touch the vehicle and ground at the same time or stand with your legs apart. Jump as far as you can away from the vehicle and land feet together. Keeping your feet together, shuffle away and don’t return to the vehicle until Avista says it’s safe.

Home electrical fires

In case of an electrical fire, here are some important tips:

- Don't touch an appliance that catches fire.
- Unplug the appliance (or shut off breaker or pull related fuse).
- Use an approved A-B-C-rated extinguisher to put out the fire. (Never use water on an electrical fire as it can shock you.)
- If you can't control the fire, evacuate the premises and call 911 from a safe place.

Avoiding shocks and burns

Electricity is a safe and reliable energy source when used properly, but it can be hazardous if used without caution. Always follow these safety tips:

- Keep appliances and electronics away from water.
- Don't overload outlets with multiple plugs or power strips.
- Only use extension cords at their recommended rating.
- Never string two extension cords together or place under a rug.
- Cover your outlets with plastic safety caps if you have small children around.
- Never insert a metal object into an appliance, like your toaster.
- Avoid any contact with your electric system. (Household gloves will not protect you.)
- If an appliance has a worn cord, sparks or smokes, have it repaired or replaced.
- Unplug cords at the plug head.
- Don't create a fire hazard by overloading electric outlets with too many plugs.
- Install GFCI outlets in bathrooms, near kitchen sink, in garages, and for outdoor outlets.
- Use a licensed electrician for home improvement projects.
- If a fire sparks from an electrical outlet, evacuate the premises and call 911.

Call to de-energize lines

If you ever find it necessary to do a project near an overhead line (such as trimming trees), Avista may be able to shut off service while you work. Call customer service ahead of time at **800-227-9187**.

Power outages

You can report and track a power outage online or on a mobile device at myavista.com. As we restore power, use these tips to keep safe:

- Turn off appliances that were on before the power went off.
- Never wire an emergency generator into your home's electrical system without a certified/ properly installed transfer switch. Back feed from a generator can injure or kill a lineman at work.
- Never connect an extension cord from a power source directly into your home's electrical system and never use household cords outdoors.
- Put your generator outdoors away from the house and vents to avoid poisonous motor exhaust.
- Only use a generator to run specific appliances (never to re-energize your house).
- Never use an outdoor grill for heating or cooking indoors as the fumes are toxic.

Checking circuit breakers

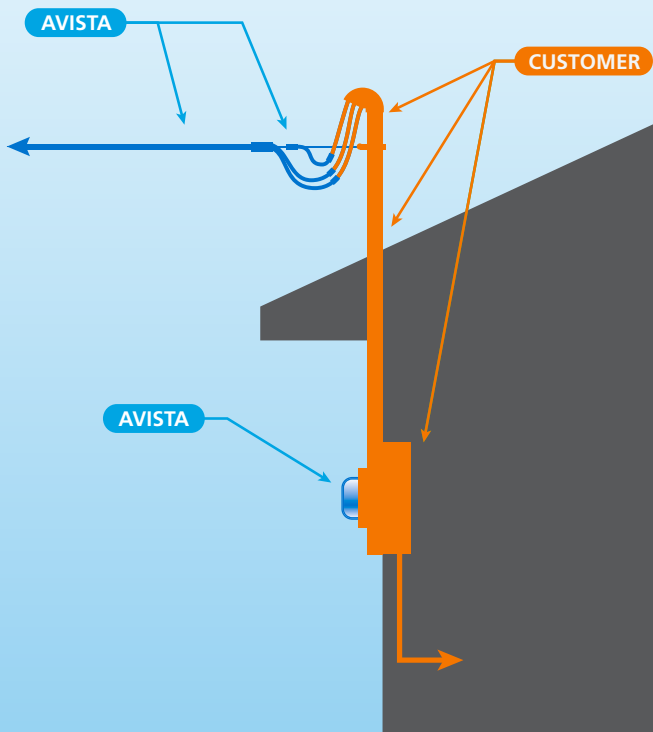
For protection against fire and electrocution, every home's electrical system includes a fuse or breaker panel. Fuses "blow" and circuit breakers automatically "trip" to cut off power when a short circuit or power overload occurs. If this happens, restoring power is easy. Simply replace the burned-out fuse with a new one that has the same rating. Or, with circuit breakers, simply flip the tripped switch back to the "on" position. The power should return immediately. If the circuit continues to "trip or blow" call an electrician and have the circuit checked for proper operation.

Overhead mast damage

In some instances, Avista's power lines connect to your home through a piece of equipment called an overhead mast. Damage to your overhead mast can cause a power outage at your residence.

This commonly happens when a tree falls onto it during a storm, or a branch gets entangled in the line, which will bend and pull the overhead mast away from the house or break fittings that compromise the wire connections to your meter.

If your masthead is ever damaged, we may have to shut off your power for safety reasons. Before we can turn the power back on, we must first ask you to have a licensed electrician make the repairs, as the masthead is not part of Avista's electric system equipment (see below).



Electric safety checklist

To help prevent accidents and keep you and your family safe around electricity, follow these general tips:

Indoors

- ☐ Keep appliances away from water and wet surfaces.
- ☐ Don't overload outlets with multiple plugs.
- ☐ Don't string together two extension cords.
- ☐ Remove any extension cords from under rugs.
- ☐ Don't touch an appliance that smokes, sparks or catches fire. Replace or repair it.
- ☐ Do not stick a utensil into a toaster.
- ☐ Purchase an A,B,C-rated fire extinguisher.
- ☐ Install child safety caps for outlets.
- ☐ Install GFCI outlets in garage, bathrooms, near kitchen sink and as outdoor outlets.
- ☐ Install smoke and carbon dioxide detectors in your home and fire extinguishers on every floor.
- ☐ Hire a licensed electrician for home improvements.
- ☐ Never use an outdoor grill for heating or cooking indoors as the fumes are toxic.
- ☐ Never wire generator power directly into your home's electrical system.
- ☐ Don't use household extension cords outdoors.

Outdoors

- ☐ Look up and around to avoid power lines.
- ☐ Remember to never touch a downed power line or other utility line; move far away and stay there.
- ☐ Avoid touching objects and people in contact with a downed line.
- ☐ Stay in your vehicle if it contacts a power line.
- ☐ If forced from the vehicle by smoke or fire, jump out and land feet together; shuffle or hop away.
- ☐ Remind kids to never retrieve balls, kites or any other objects that go over a substation fence.
- ☐ Do not attach your fence to a substation fence.
- ☐ Never use an extension cord to bring power from a neighbor's house to your own; it is a fire hazard and someone could get electrocuted.

Be prepared in case of a long duration power outage or natural disaster

While our system is very reliable, accidents and natural disasters can cause extended outages, it is important for you to know what to do in the case of a long duration power outage.

Power outage checklist

- ☐ Turn off all appliances that were on prior to the outage.
- ☐ Unplug computers and electronics unless you have a surge protector.
- ☐ Leave on a porch light so our crews will know your power is restored.
- ☐ Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed.
- ☐ Lower your thermostat setting.
- ☐ Wait a half hour after the power returns before resetting your thermostat.
- ☐ Always keep flashlights handy.

Keep emergency supplies in one place.

- ☐ Non-perishable food and water for at least three days
- ☐ Manual can opener
- ☐ Personal hygiene items
- ☐ Flashlights with fresh batteries
- ☐ Portable, battery-powered radio
- ☐ Prescription medicine(s) and medical equipment
- ☐ Wind-up or battery powered clock
- ☐ Food and water for any pets

Plan for required medical needs.

- ☐ Be prepared to seek medical assistance if you experience a health-related emergency during a power outage.
- ☐ Prearrange staying with friends or relatives so you have somewhere to go if there is a power outage.
- ☐ Research whether a portable generator is appropriate for your situation. Visit a local hardware store or talk to a licensed electrical contractor to learn about options.
- ☐ Talk to your physician about alternative measures should your power be interrupted.

Practice manually opening barriers.

- ☐ Electric garage door
- ☐ Security doors
- ☐ Electric gates

Safety matters

Avista wants to keep everyone safe. If your dwelling has occupants or tenants, keep them informed by asking us for more brochures. For additional information, visit **myavista.com** or call **800-227-9187**.

View helpful safety videos at:
myavista.com/safetyvideos.

Если Вы хотели бы получить информацию о правилах безопасности на русском языке, пожалуйста звоните по телефону 800-227-9187.

Si desea recibir información en Español acerca de la seguridad, por favor llamar a: 800-227-9187.

For assistance with alternative languages, please call 800-227-9187.

Avista
Public Safety Dept.
P.O. Box 3727
Spokane, WA 99220-3727
publicsafety@avistacorp.com

