



ENERGY CONNECTIONS

MARCH 2017

Customer Notice

Responsibility of Home/Property Owner or Current Occupant

The maintenance of buried gas piping downstream of the gas meter to gas-fired appliances or other various structures on the property is the responsibility of the home/property owner or current occupant. NorthWestern Energy is required to inform customers with privately owned natural gas or propane service lines of their responsibility to inspect and maintain their piping (Code of Federal Regulations 49 CFR 192.16). Customers should have the pipes periodically inspected for leaks and metallic pipes should also be inspected for corrosion by qualified professionals, like your local plumber. Any unsafe conditions should be repaired immediately or the flow of gas should be shut off. Piping that is not maintained may be subject to corrosion or leaking. When digging near buried gas pipes, the pipes should be located in advance and the excavation done by hand.

Excess Gas Flow Valve Notice

If a gas service is installed to your home, you have the option to purchase an Excess Flow Valve (EFV) to be installed by NorthWestern Energy. An EFV is intended to stop the flow of gas if the service line is severed. The EFV is placed in the service line where it leaves the gas main.

An EFV will stop the flow of gas only if the service line is severely damaged. It is important to note that an EFV will not protect you from a leak or broken line inside your home, or a small leak on the line in your yard. An example of when the valve provides protection is in the event the gas service is damaged from digging or extreme ground movement.

As required by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), we are notifying you that an EFV that meets the minimum prescribed DOT performance standards, is available for installation on your natural gas service line.

The cost of installing the EFV will need to be evaluated by an engineer. If you are interested, please contact your local NorthWestern Energy office to set up an appointment. This payment is required prior to installation of the EFV.

What is 811?

811 is the "Call Before You Dig" or the "One-Call" System which has been set up to prevent damage to people, property and underground facilities. Best of all? It's FREE!

Be safe and always call 811; it's the law. When you call before you dig, you'll prevent unintended consequences such as potential injury to you or your family, possible damage to your property, costly utility service outages and potential fines for repair costs.

Call 811 from anywhere in the country two days prior to digging, and your call will be routed to your local One Call Center. Tell the operator where you're planning to dig

and what type of work you will be doing. To assist locate crews; you should mark the dig area with white paint or stakes - even before you make the call.

Notification is sent to the affected local utility companies about your intent to dig. Usually the locator has two business days to mark the approximate location of your underground lines, pipes and cables, so you'll know what's below - and are able to dig safely. Remember, as an additional precaution, always carefully hand dig within 18" of any markings. It is required to get marks refreshed at least every 30 days as locate marks expire 30 days from the date 811 is called.

We want to see your yard and home improvement projects!

Believe it or not, Spring is just around the corner! Soon you'll be doing yard work and getting to that "honey do" list.

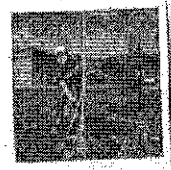
Remember to take the time to go online at www.callbeforeyoudig.org and fill out a request or call 811 or 1-800-424-5555 before you take on any digging project.

What happens after you call?

- Colored lines are marked by various utility companies (water, power, gas, cable) within a two business days. Make sure you know what each color means and plan your digging accordingly.
- You're almost ready to dig in. Check the area before proceeding with your project. Some underground lines on the property may be privately owned and not marked by a utility. Other underground lines may be considered privately owned if they are between the meter and the home or business. In these cases, a charge by the utility may

apply to locate and mark those lines, and a special request to must be made

- If you are using heavy equipment or planting tall trees, be sure to take time to observe overhead power and utility lines. Additionally, utilizing a spotter is recommended when digging with an excavator.
- Remember, it's not just about digging. Don't lay cement or pavement over the top of an established gas line, or you might end up paying fees to re-route that line.
- Have fun with your project. Take time to post a picture of your planted tree, or yard project on Instagram; share it with us @ NorthWestern_Energy and use #ICalled811



Calling 811 saves time & money

Did you know that costs accrued can easily exceed \$10,000 if you don't call 811 and a utility line is hit while digging? According to state laws in which NorthWestern operates, anyone who excavates, trenches, plows, drills, augers, blasts, strips topsoil or levels land is required to give notice at least two working days before any excavation work is started.

Excavators who damage underground facilities without first calling to request and obtain locates must pay the full cost of

repairs. In the case of personal injury or loss of life, as the excavator, you may be subject to a civil suit. When electrical, natural gas, and other service lines become ruptured or damaged, the responsible excavator is charged for the repair.

NorthWestern
Energy
Delivering a Bright Future