



# AUSTELL GAS SYSTEM

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(770) 948-1841 [24 hrs./day] • [www.austellgas.com](http://www.austellgas.com)

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## Hazard Awareness and Prevention

Most natural gas pipelines are buried underground not only for safety reasons, but also to protect them from weather and to provide reliable service. Despite the excellent safety record of the natural gas industry, sometimes pipeline failures do occur due to line rupture, corrosion, material failure or other causes such as, digging into a pipeline. Natural gas is lighter than air, in the open atmosphere gas rises and dissipates into the air. In a closed area, natural gas rises to the highest level and may accumulate. Natural gas is combustible and can be dangerous. Potential hazards from escaping gas when exposed to an ignition source are fire and/or explosion. Additionally, natural gas can displace oxygen in a confined space causing asphyxiation.

Here at Austell Gas, we work diligently to operate our system safely and prevent incidents through a variety of measures including the following:

- Pipeline Integrity Management Program
- Coordination with the Utilities Protection Center
- Design, construction, operations, and maintenance standards
- Pipeline safety regulations
- Inspection procedures
- Workforce qualifications
- Pipeline markers
- Facility mapping
- Industry best practices

### **Additional information:**

Austell Gas System welcomes your questions regarding natural gas safety. Please feel free to contact us at  
770-948-1841

### **Other sources:**

- U.S. DOT Pipeline & Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) –  
<http://www.phmsa.dot.gov/pipelineforum>
- Georgia 811 - <http://www.georgia811.com>
- American Public Gas Association (APGA) –  
<http://www.apga.org>
- American Gas Association (AGA) – <http://aga.org>
- Common Ground Alliance (CGA) –  
<http://www.commongroundalliance.com>
- Georgia Public Service Commission (GPSC) –  
<http://www.psc.state.ga.us>

## Damage Prevention / One Call

The Georgia Dig Law requires both professional excavators and homeowners to have utility lines marked

before performing any mechanized digging, demolition, or working within 10 feet of overhead power lines. Call **811** even if you plan to manually dig. By knowing where underground utility lines are buried before digging will help protect you from injury and/or expense.

Calling the Utilities Protection Center before digging is a service free of charge. Call at least 48 hours, but no more than 10 working days, excluding weekends and legal holidays, before starting your digging project. Calling **811** starts the process to get your underground utility lines marked.

The single greatest cause of accidents regarding natural gas pipelines is digging by third party excavators. Third Party refers to those other than the pipeline operator. Please report any suspected signs of damage to our pipeline. If you strike a natural gas pipeline, please immediately notify us even if the damage seems to be minor, such as a scrape or dent.

Safety is for everyone. Please watch for markers indicating where natural gas pipelines are located and always:

**CALL BEFORE YOU DIG**  
**1-800-282-7411 or 811**



## Leak Recognition and Response

Natural gas is a mixture of hydrocarbon gases, primarily methane that has certain physical qualities that control the way it behaves. Natural gas is colorless, odorless, and lighter than air. An odorant is added to natural gas to give it a recognizable smell. This odor is commonly referred to a “rotten egg” smell.

If you detect faint whiffs of this odor:

Investigate. If possible “follow your nose” to the source. It may be only a pilot that is out, or a burner valve partially turned on... something easily and safely corrected. If the source of gas cannot be located or if the odor persists, call Austell Gas for assistance at 770-948-1841, option “1”.

Any situation involving gas facilities or operations that could possibly endanger human life, cause damage to property, or disrupt normal service to customers is considered an emergency. The following are potential hazards you should know:

Pipeline leak where uncontrolled gas is escaping into the atmosphere

Gas migrating into a home or building from an outside leak

Gas leak inside a home or building

The greatest risk to underground pipelines is accidental damage during excavation. The three key ways that may indicate a natural gas leak are:

**Sight:** look for blowing dirt, bubbling water, dry spots in moist areas, dead or dying vegetation in an otherwise green environment, or fire coming from the ground.

**Unusual Sound:** listen for any unusual noise like a hissing, blowing, roaring, or whistling sound.

**Smell:** if that noticeable “rotten egg” smell is rising intensely, or seems to be everywhere:

**Outdoors:** Immediately leave the area and call Austell Gas System at 770-948-1841, option “1”.

**Indoors:** Immediately leave the premises. . .

Do not create any source of possible ignition by using a telephone or cell phone, striking a match, lighting a lighter, turning on or off an electric light, appliance, or other device.

Do not re-enter the premise/area until a leak investigation has been conducted; only emergency personnel should enter the premise/area.

**Call Austell Gas System from a safe location at 770-948-1841, option “1”.**

**Call 911 if conditions warrant!**

Austell Gas System maintains an ongoing working relationship with local emergency response personnel so that an effective and professional response is given to all gas related emergencies.

## Carbon Monoxide

When a natural gas appliance is properly operating, complete combustion safely burns the gas. Complete combustion produces carbon dioxide and water vapor, non-hazardous by-products. However, incomplete combustion occurs when there is insufficient air available for complete burning of the fuel. The most dangerous by-product of incomplete combustion is carbon monoxide (CO). Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, tasteless, poisonous gas that is produced by the incomplete burning of various fuels such as, coal, wood, oil, kerosene, charcoal, propane, and natural gas. Because CO is undetectable to the human senses, a person may not know that they are being exposed to CO poisoning. The initial symptoms of low to moderate CO poisoning are similar to the flu. They include:

- Headache
- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Shortness of breath

Higher levels of CO poisoning include:

- Vomiting
- Mental confusion
- Loss of muscular coordination
- Loss of consciousness
- Too much inhaled CO can be fatal

How to prevent CO poisoning:

- Appliances should be installed and operated according to the manufacturer’s instructions and local codes.

- At the beginning of every heating season, have your heating system and other fuel burning appliances professionally inspected and serviced by a HVAC dealer or licensed plumber.
- Install carbon monoxide alarms on every level of your home that will sound when potentially dangerous levels of CO are detected.

If any member of your household is experiencing symptoms of CO poisoning, immediately get them out of the house and seek medical attention. If you suspect carbon monoxide, play it safe and get fresh air immediately. Austell Gas System personnel are available at all times to perform an investigation. Please call 770-948-1841, Option “1”.

## Pipeline Purpose and Reliability



Over the years, Austell Gas System has delivered exceptional natural gas service to meet the energy needs of our customers. Austell Gas System receives natural gas from our supplier at three separately located city gate stations. This received natural gas then travels through our well maintained network of pressure regulating equipment, mains, service lines, and meters until it reaches the end user. Austell Gas operates a safe and secure natural gas system. Proven pipeline integrity is due to the design, construction, operation, inspection and maintenance of our entire natural gas system along with evaluating and enhancing our pipeline security.

## Flexible Connectors



Flexible corrugated metal gas connectors are used to attach gas appliances such as gas furnaces, ranges, water heaters, and clothes dryers to gas supply lines and should not be used as a substitute for gas piping.

Two or more connectors should not be joined together neither should they be installed through walls, floors, cabinets, etc.

Some older, uncoated brass connectors can possibly be a safety hazard. This is due to corrosion or breakage causing a gas



leak. Moving an appliance can cause failure of one of these older weaker flexible connectors. It is recommended that these older connectors be immediately replaced.