



# WINTER SAFETY TIPS

## Check your meter vent

The natural gas meter's outdoor regulator vent must always be clear so the flow of natural gas into the home can be regulated properly. If this vent becomes plugged, the pressure of gas being pumped into the home could either increase or decrease to a dangerous level, resulting in a fire or explosion. Any airflow blockage can lead to big problems and even carbon monoxide poisoning.

## Clear a path to your meter

Shovel or plow a path to your meter and ensure your natural gas meter is visible at all times and accessible for maintenance and emergency responders.

## Don't bury your meter and vents

Take care not to cover meters when shoveling or snow-blowing.

## Watch for falling snow and ice

Check to ensure that melting snow or ice from the roof or nearby trees is not dripping on the meter, and that the meter is clear following rooftop snow removal.

## Plow with caution

Be sure to avoid meters and control panels (the large green electric boxes often located near walkways) while plowing. If you hit the equipment, be sure to report it right away.

## Keep your meter clear of snow and ice

Carefully remove snow or ice from the gas meter and any associated piping. Do this gently with a broom or by hand.

## Stay away from downed power lines

Heavy snow can bring down power lines. If you see a downed line, stay away from it and report it to NorthWestern Energy immediately. Assume all downed lines are energized and dangerous.

## Recognizing a gas pipeline leak

Call 911, if you notice any of these signs of a pipeline leak:

- An unusual blowing or hissing sound coming from the ground.
- Dirt or dust blowing from a hole in the ground.
- Bubbling ponds.
- Dead or discolored vegetation in an otherwise green area near a pipeline right of way.
- A fire close to a buried pipeline.

## What to do if you smell natural gas

NorthWestern Energy makes it easy for you to detect natural gas leaks by adding an unpleasant rotten egg or skunk-like smell to natural gas.

If you smell this odor:

- Leave the area immediately.
- Do not use phones, matches, light switches or anything else that could trigger the ignition of the gas.
- When at a safe distance, call 911.

## Prevent carbon monoxide exposure

Natural gas isn't poisonous, but like other fuels, it produces carbon monoxide (CO) as it burns. Carbon monoxide must be vented properly to prevent CO poisoning.

- Have your heating system, water heater and any other gas appliance serviced every year.
- Install a CO detector in your home. If the detector sounds leave your home immediately and call 911.
- Seek prompt medical help if you suspect CO poisoning and are feeling dizzy, light-headed, or nauseated.

