



## Benefits of Natural Gas

Homes and businesses throughout the Town of Century love natural gas because of its lower cost and high efficiency. But there are many other benefits and features that come into play when natural gas is used wherever and whenever possible.

### Effective

- Natural gas costs less to use than all other fossil fuels and electricity.
- More than 99 out of 100 professional chefs prefer natural gas. The other guy makes sushi.
- Natural gas dries clothes in roughly half the time, at half the cost, with fewer wrinkles than its electric counterpart.
- Instant temperature control when cooking with natural gas range.
- With a natural gas tank-less water heater, you can take a shower all day long. It heats water faster than you use it.
- Natural gas tank water heaters refresh much faster and cost much less to use than electric.
- More than 70% of the nation heats their homes with natural gas. The other 30% does not have a pipeline nearby or has not signed up yet.
- For all the above reasons, homes with natural gas, on average, have a 6% higher resale value than non-gas homes. (Source: NHBA – National Home Builders Association)

### Reliable

- After a hurricane or storm, when the power goes out, people with natural gas water heaters and ranges can still take hot showers and cook meals until the power comes back.
- Natural gas stand-by generators are also available, capable of powering an entire household, to sustain operation for all standard electric appliances as well.

## **Environmentally Friendly**

- The direct use of natural gas by homes and businesses dramatically reduces the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere. (Imagine if the entire world switched to natural gas and stopped using so much oil and coal.)
- The more compressed natural gas (CNG) used for transportation, the less foreign oil needed to import.

## **Domestic**

- Natural gas is America's own natural resource - building independence from foreign oil.
- In Florida, because of natural gas' affordability and clean burning nature, 85% of the natural gas consumed in Florida is by power companies.
- We have enough natural gas in the America's to last for hundreds of years.

## **What is natural gas?**

Natural gas is a naturally occurring fuel extracted from deep within the earth. It is not one gas but a mixture of various naturally occurring gases. The types of gases in this stew vary from well to well. Natural gas is primarily methane, but also contains other flammable gases such as propane, butane, carbon monoxide and hydrogen. Since natural gas is colorless and odorless in its native state, it is mandatory by the Federal Government to use an odorant to make it readily detectable.

## **What should I do when there is a strong gas odor in the house?**

1. Leave the house immediately.
2. DO NOT make calls from your home. Phones can produce a spark, which could start a fire or explosion. Contact the Town of Century at 850-256-3208 from a phone outside and away from your home.
3. DO NOT light a match or other combustible material. Likewise, DO NOT turn any light switches on or off, and DO NOT plug or unplug electrical appliances such as a television or vacuum cleaner. These activities also can produce a spark that could start a fire or explosion.
4. Do not re-enter the house until the gas company finds the source of the leak and corrects it.

## **Is it safe to use the gas meter for electric bonding?**

No! Electric bonding to or use of Town of Century service piping, gas risers or meter facilities for electric grounding is not permitted. Use caution when touching gas meters. Faulty household appliances or faulty household electrical wiring could inadvertently introduce electricity to gas facilities.

## **What are other properties of natural gas?**

- **Natural Gas is Nontoxic**

Natural gas contains no toxic poisonous ingredients that can be absorbed into the blood when inhaled.

- **Natural Gas is Lighter Than Air**

If natural gas escapes into the atmosphere, it dissipates rapidly. A heavier-than-air gas, such as propane or gasoline fumes, would settle and accumulate near the ground.

- **Natural Gas is Colorless**

When mixed with the proper amount of air and ignited, invisible natural gas burns with a clean, blue flame. It is one of the cleanest burning fuels, producing primarily heat, carbon dioxide and water vapor.

- **Natural Gas is Odorless**

When taken from the ground, natural gas is odorless. A harmless but pungent odor is added as a safety precaution. The odorant is so powerful you can smell even the smallest quantity of gas in the event of a leak.

- **Natural Gas Has Narrow Combustion Limits**

This helps ensure predictable, safe use. Natural gas will only ignite when there is an air-and-gas mixture of between 5 and 15 percent natural gas. Any mixture containing less than 5 percent or greater than 15 percent natural gas will not ignite.

- **Natural Gas Reduces Our Dependence on Foreign-oil Imports**

More than 90 percent of the natural gas Americans use comes from the lower 48 states. The rest comes from Canada.

- **Natural Gas Contributes to a Cleaner Environment**

It is the cleanest-burning fossil fuel available. It helps improve air and water quality, especially when used in place of more polluting energy sources. When natural gas burns, virtually no harmful pollutants are produced.

## **Are all gas department employees required to be qualified to work with or around Natural Gas?**

Yes! The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) issued a final operator qualification (OQ) rule in August 1999 that was the result of negotiation among federal pipeline safety officials, America Gas Association (AGA) and allied natural gas industry representatives and others. The rule gave operators until October 26, 2002, to qualify the workforce performing covered tasks during pipeline operations and maintenance. This effort was successfully completed.

The Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 directed DOT to put in place standards and criteria to evaluate such programs and issue a report to Congress. To comply with the law, AGA and other pipeline industry representatives worked with state and federal regulators to develop “audit protocols” to aid regulators in evaluating operator qualification programs. Stakeholders also developed computer-based software and other technology to support a national infrastructure for operator qualification programs.

The DOT report to congress concluded that:

- Operators showed a strong willingness to quickly address inspection findings and improve their OQ programs.
- Events attributable to human error and to operator excavation damage have been on a downward trend over the last five years. Because the number of such events is small, and because operator programs continue to mature, it is too soon to attribute these trends with great certainty to the OQ program.

AGA expects DOT to make minor modifications to the OQ regulation. The national trade associations support adding requirements for training when appropriate and a five-year maximum requalification interval. The trade associations do not endorse including new construction in the OQ program but note that many AGA member companies have voluntarily include new construction in the OQ programs.

The Pipeline Safety Act of 2006 requires DOT to issue regulations to address fatigue and other human factors for pipeline controllers by June 1, 2008. The OQ program will likely be a major element in satisfying the human factors portion of the new regulation.

## **Public Safety Awareness**

### **Damage Prevention Awareness**

Florida State Law, Chapter 556 in the Florida State Statute requires calling a one call center before you dig.

This does not pertain only to businesses. Homeowners putting in pools, clotheslines, mailboxes, flowers, and playground equipment need to also consider that there could be underground lines that could be tapped into. ANYTIME you dig for any reason a call needs to be placed to the Town building department at 850-256-3208 to see if a building permit will be required for the job.

Sunshine State One Call of Florida, Inc. can be contacted by dialing 811. The law requires you call **TWO** days prior to digging. This will ensure that you do not cut any buried lines. There is no cost for this service. If you need any additional information, you can visit [www.sunshine811.com](http://www.sunshine811.com) or call the Town of Century at 850-256-3208 to have a Gas Representative come and speak with you and locate any gas lines.

## **Leak Recognition and Response**

What to do if you smell gas in your home or building?

Leave immediately and tell others to leave too!

From a safe distance call Town Hall at 850-256-3208 to notify us.

Never try to repair a gas leak yourself. Do not turn any lights on or off, smoke or use any phones or other equipment that could cause sparks.

Here is what the flags or other physical markings mean to guide you before you dig:

White proposed excavation

Blue potable water

Green sewers and drain lines

Purple reclaimed water and irrigation

Pink temporary survey markings

Red electric power lines, cables, conduit and lightning cables

Yellow gas, oil, steam, petroleum or gaseous materials

Orange communication, alarm or signal lines, cables or conduits

Call 811 before you dig or visit the [Sunshine 811](#) website. This is a free service to help keep the Town of Century safe!

### **Who is required to notify Sunshine 811?**

Anyone who intends to excavate (disturb the surface of the earth) in Florida, unless a specific exemption listed in s. 556.108, F.S., applies.

### **I've hit a gas line; what do I do now?**

Whether there is visible damage or not, you must stop excavating. If lives or property are in danger, call 911 immediately. Then notify the owner of the affected underground facility directly. Excavators and members may access the emergency contact book using Internet Ticket Entry. Others can call Sunshine State One Call at (800) 638-4097.

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