



Excavation Safety for Natural Gas Pipelines

Safety



ENSTAR Natural Gas Company provides natural gas service through 3,580 miles of gas mains to over 142,000 customers in South Central Alaska. ENSTAR's gas pipeline system is designed, installed, and maintained with the highest regard for safety in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local government statutes and regulations. ENSTAR is regularly inspected to ensure that its operation meets industry standards.

The US Department of Transportation, Pipeline & Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) oversees minimum safety regulations for the transportation of natural gas by pipelines. The DOT safety regulations are currently published in Title 49, Part 190, 191, 192 & 199 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).

The Law

Call **811** before you dig; it's free and it's the law. Calling for locates is now as simple as dialing **811** or go online to www.akonecall.com. In Alaska, dialing **811** connects you with Alaska Digline Inc. Alaska Digline Inc. will take your excavation information and notify all affected utilities. Utilities have two business days to mark their utilities after receiving your call.

PHMSA is the excavation damage enforcement agency in the State of Alaska. The enforcement program protects the public from the risk of pipeline ruptures caused by excavation damage. Should an excavator violate any of the damage prevention requirements prescribed in 49 CFR part 196, Subpart B, they may face civil and or criminal penalties. Civil penalties of not more than \$200,000 for each violation, not to exceed \$2,000,000 may be levied. Criminal penalties may be enforced with imprisonment of not more than 5 years per violation. More information about the PHMSA ruling can be found at <http://www.phmsa.dot.gov/>.



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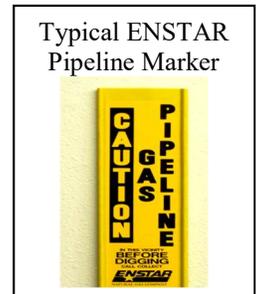
Pipeline Markers

Do not assume there is not a pipeline if there is no marker.

ENSTAR transmission pipelines are generally marked above ground with pipeline markers similar to the one shown. Transmission pipelines are located in the vicinity of the pipeline markers. Transmission pipelines are steel and range in size from 2" to 20" in diameter. They are typically coated with a protective coating. Pipeline coatings are predominantly yellow and black, but may also be green or brown.

Distribution pipelines are steel, or High Density polyethylene with locate wire. These pipelines range in size from 1" diameter to 12" in diameter. Gas "Mains" are typically found in street right-of-ways or utility easements and supply the natural gas to an entire street or subdivision.

Natural gas service lines are connected to the gas main. Service lines generally serve a single building or small group of buildings on private property. Service lines are typically 1/2" to 2" in diameter. Service lines can be rigid steel, steel tubing, copper or polyethylene with locate wire. Gas mains and service lines are generally black or yellow in color.



Steps to Follow

- 1 Line Locating: A Free Service:** To request a locate, dial **811**, the Nationally recognized One-Call number and you will be connected to Alaska Digline Inc. Call at least 2 but not more than 15 working days before the date scheduled for beginning the excavation.
- 2 Request a Relocate Ticket when:** the marks have not been maintained, the excavator is unable to accurately "read" the locate marks, the marks have been destroyed, or the marks are more than 15 working days old.
- 3 Excavating around Locate Marks:** In Alaska, you must use reasonable care when digging within 24 horizontal inches of the outside dimensions of the locate marks. If you are digging to a depth of 10 feet or greater, you must use reasonable care within 30 horizontal inches. *Treat all buried lines as if they were active.*

Typical means of excavating around locate marks:

- Hand Dig
- Air Knife
- Vac Truck

- 4 Standby/Inspection Requirements:** Extreme caution must be exercised whenever pipelines are encountered. All excavations in the immediate vicinity of ENSTAR Natural Gas facilities (including backfill, compaction, temporary support, and shoring), are subject to prior approval and inspection by ENSTAR personnel. Pipeline inspections are provided whenever an excavator is working within 10 feet of a transmission pipeline, or within 5 feet of a distribution line. If excavation occurs without either locates or standby (qualified ENSTAR personnel), ENSTAR Natural Gas reserves the right to excavate to determine if there has been any damage to ENSTAR Natural Gas facilities. If damage has occurred ENSTAR Natural Gas has the right to charge the excavator for repairs.





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- 5 Support for Steel Pipeline Crossings:** If an excavation below a **steel gas** pipeline leaves the pipeline unsupported for a distance of more than 20 feet, the excavator must provide additional support for the pipeline. Support must be provided in a way as to not damage the pipe or its coating during construction, backfill placement, and compaction. Generally, a support spacing of 5 feet or less will provide the required support. ENSTAR Engineering must approve all excavations crossing steel pipelines above 4-inch diameter. If support is required, ENSTAR engineering written approval is required prior to beginning construction. Call ENSTAR Engineering (907)334-7740 for further information. Extra care must be taken when geotextile fabric and/or rigid insulation are used. Geotextile fabric and/or rigid insulation shall be sufficiently separated from steel pipeline and in addition to continuous support under the pipeline, compacted fill material shall be placed between the geotextile fabric/rigid insulation and the pipeline (see item 10 clearance). Care shall be taken to insure stability for the ENSTAR facility. Failure to properly protect ENSTAR's facilities could result in future damage if differential settlement occurs.
- 6 Support for Polyethylene Line Crossings:** If an excavation is below a **polyethylene gas pipeline** the excavator must continuously support such pipeline during construction, backfill placement, and compaction. Geotextile fabric and/or rigid insulation shall be sufficiently separated from the polyethylene gas pipeline to prevent undue stress during the compaction/settlement process. (see item 10 clearance)
- 7 Excavation Parallel to Pipeline: Whenever an excavation (horizontal or vertical) is performed within 5 feet of a distribution pressure pipeline and 10 feet of a transmission pressure pipeline, the gas pipeline must be exposed to visually determine the exact location.** When parallel excavations are expected to expose or undermine sections of pipeline, the excavator must notify ENSTAR engineering in advance. Care must be taken not to damage the pipeline, or to induce stresses due to differential settlement following construction. **Long parallel excavations exposing pipelines can be very dangerous if not properly performed and shall not be attempted without prior approval by ENSTAR.** Unless otherwise approved by ENSTAR engineering, all excavations parallel to a gas pipeline require that the pipeline be exposed at intervals no greater than every 25 feet to visually determine the pipeline's exact location. Contact ENSTAR Engineering at (907)334-7740 for additional information.
- 8 Blasting:** All plans for blasting that will occur within 500' of any Company Facility, shall be reviewed by an ENSTAR engineer. The person performing the blasting shall take all appropriate measures as recommended by ENSTAR engineering, (i.e. require minimum distance from facilities, minimize blasting charge intensity, etc.) to protect the integrity of the Company's Facilities. A leak survey shall be performed before and after any blasting activity, within 500' of any Company Facility.
- 9 Trenchless Excavation (Vertical or Horizontal): Whenever a trenchless excavation (horizontal or vertical) is performed within 5 feet of a distribution pressure pipeline and 10 feet of a transmission pressure pipeline, the gas pipeline must be exposed to visually determine the exact location.** If the trenchless excavation is expected to cross the pipeline within the aforementioned distances, the pipeline in question shall be fully exposed to a minimum of 1 foot beneath the pipeline prior to the expected crossing to ensure that the pipeline is not unduly damaged due to ground movement in the immediate vicinity of the pipeline. **When performing a trenchless excavation parallel to a gas pipeline, the gas pipeline must be exposed at intervals of 25 feet or less to visually determine the pipeline's exact location.** Trenchless excavation is defined as drilling, directional drilling, boring, pile installation etc.
- 10 Clearance:** Natural Gas pipelines require a **12 inch minimum separation from other underground structures** not associated with ENSTAR's pipeline system. Additional clearance from other underground structures may be required to allow proper maintenance and reduce the possibility of damage due to



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the proximity of other structures (49 CFR § 192.325.) This clearance requirement includes rigid insulation and geotextile fabrics. **ENSTAR requires a 36-inch minimum separation from certain electrical facilities, including any grounded components i.e. ground rods, non-insulated conductors and associated structures.**

- 11 Pipeline Cover:** ENSTAR pipelines in public rights-of-way are generally installed with 36 inches to 48 inches of cover, and in private rights-of-way with 12 inches to 36 inches of cover. Projects that decrease cover or increase cover in excess of 60 inches must receive prior approval from ENSTAR Engineering Department (907)334-7740. ENSTAR has limited ability to prevent the removal of cover over gas pipelines. Increasing pipeline cover more than 5 feet or decreasing pipeline cover to less than 3 feet may be considered a damage that may result in relocation of the gas pipeline at the expense of the Excavator. The depth of cover listed above cannot be assumed after installation. The excavator is responsible for any damage to ENSTAR pipelines regardless of the depth at which they are encountered.
- 12 Landscaping:** Most landscaping activities require locates, and when it is determined that landscaping activities are within 5 feet of a distribution pipeline, or 10 feet of a transmission pipeline, Inspection/Standby requirements as listed above are applicable. Planting of trees and shrubs over existing pipelines is not permissible and can present a safety and reliability hazard to the pipeline.

Damage Reporting

If you damage a gas line, immediately Call 911 and ENSTAR at 1-844-SMELL GAS (1-844-763-5542). It's the Law.

Gas lines that have been pulled, stretched, kinked or bent could be damaged underground away from where the line is connected. If you pull or stretch gas lines call ENSTAR at (907)277-5551 and an ENSTAR Representative will investigate for possible underground leakage.

Pipe Wall Protection

Dents, scrapes, gouges and scratches reduce pipeline wall thickness and affect the safety of the facility in two ways. First, the reduced wall thickness decreases the pressure at which the pipeline can safely operate. Second, the damage serves as a stress concentration that can cause a future brittle failure of the pipeline. **An ENSTAR representative must inspect each dent, scrape, gouge or scratch, no matter how small, before it is reburied.**

Corrosion Protection

ENSTAR's **steel** pipelines are protected from corrosion by a dielectric coating and an impressed current or galvanic anode cathodic protection system. Direct contact with metallic objects (a short) or removal of the protective coating can compromise this system. Contact the ENSTAR Engineering Department (907)334-7740, whenever coating damage or a short is encountered. **An ENSTAR representative must inspect each short or section of damaged coating before it is reburied.**

Locate Wire Protection

ENSTAR's **polyethylene** pipelines are installed with a parallel copper wire, which is used to locate the pipeline. If the locate wire or wire coating is damaged, ENSTAR's ability to properly locate the pipeline may be severely compromised. Electrical continuity must be maintained. **An ENSTAR representative must**





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inspect and/repair each possible locate wire damage before it is reburied, accidental locate wire damage repair is free of charge.

Excess Flow Valves

An Excess Flow Valve (EFV) is a safety device installed in a natural gas service line near the gas main that is designed to automatically shut off the flow of natural gas in the event that the service line is broken. Effective April 14th, 2017, all gas companies nationwide are required to install an EFV or a curb-side shut off valve in any new or renewed service lines.

What does this mean to you as an Excavator?

Should you damage a natural gas service line that has an EFV, the gas will blow for a short duration and shut off automatically if the flow of gas is sufficient to close the EFV. Damages that do not sever the service line completely may not cause the EFV to close and the gas will continue to blow. Regardless, **you must report all damages to ENSTAR immediately**. EFVs are designed to allow a small amount of “bleed-by” so they can be reset without excavating the gas main. Backfilling a damaged service line with gas bleeding underground is extremely dangerous and could fuel an explosion if it is not repaired timely. **Do not assume a damaged service is dead or abandoned if it is not blowing gas**. The EFV may have shut down the flow of gas. Report all damages immediately by calling **1-844-SMELL-GAS**.

Please remember that the vast majority of ENSTAR service lines WILL NOT have an EFV. Should you damage a service line without an EFV, gas will blow at full line pressure until ENSTAR can arrive to shut it off. Your best protection against damaging underground utilities is to call **811** for locates and hand dig within 2 feet of the locate marks.

What to do if You Smell Gas

Natural gas actually does not have a natural odor, but mercaptan compounds are added to distribution system gas to enable you to smell a leak. If you smell the characteristic Sulphur odor, call ENSTAR at 1-844-SMELL GAS (1-844-763-5542)

Qualified Personnel Requirements

Only qualified individuals meeting all applicable requirements may perform work on Natural Gas facilities. At a minimum, such individuals must comply with applicable federal, state and local regulation, statutes, and ordinances.

Additional pipeline information can be found on the following websites:

PHMSA/DOT	https://phmsa.dot.gov/pipeline
Common Ground Alliance	http://www.commongroundalliance.com
Pipeline 101	http://www.pipeline101.com
Alaska Digline, Inc.	http://www.akonecall.com/



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BURIED SEWER
BURIED GAS LINE
BURIED WATER
BURIED ELECTRIC

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1-844-SMELL GAS
1-844-763-5542

For further information about ENSTAR, visit our web site @ www.enstarnaturalgas.com

