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Every day, Americans use nearly 62 billion cubic feet of natural gas—safely transported to homes and businesses via an “energy highway.” This elaborate pipeline system is buried underground not only for safety reasons, but also to protect it from the weather and ensure uninterrupted reliable service.

Dominion works hard to keep our natural gas pipeline system safe for everyone. We sponsor natural gas safety education programs, meet regularly with public and emergency officials, conduct frequent operations and maintenance inspections and have sophisticated leak detection equipment in place.....basically everything we can to operate and maintain safe pipeline systems.

Despite our efforts to maintain a safe and reliable system, third party damage is one of the greatest obstacles we face. Excavation damage is the leading cause of “significant” pipeline incidents causing injury or fatality. Even minor contact with a pipeline, such as a small dent, chip or scratch, can cause major damage down the road if not professionally inspected and/or repaired as needed. Ironically, this safety threat is also the most preventable.

We’re asking public officials to partner with us in this important safety initiative by promoting safe digging throughout your community. By law, individuals must contact the Ohio Utilities Protection Service (O.U.P.S.) by dialing 811 or 1-800-362-2764, at least two working days but no more than 10 days



prior to any digging, ditching, and drilling, leveling or plowing activity. Representatives of Dominion will then come to the location and designate nearby underground natural gas pipelines in the work area with highly visible yellow paint and/or yellow flag markers, free of charge. We encourage you to keep this information in mind when speaking with residents in your jurisdiction and approving new building projects — even minor ones like home additions and decks.

It’s also a good idea for you to familiarize yourself with the transmission, distribution and regulated gathering pipelines located in your community. Dominion submits maps of its transmission pipelines along with other pipeline operators to the **National Pipeline Mapping System** and they can be viewed by logging onto their website at <https://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov> .

While rare, natural gas line leaks can be extremely dangerous with the potential hazards of fire or explosions. Everyone should know the signs of a natural gas leak:

- **SMELL** - To help you SMELL a leak from a natural gas line or appliance, a familiar odor similar to sulfur or rotten eggs is added to natural gas.
- **SEE** - Near a gas leak, you might SEE blowing dirt, bubbling water or an unusual area of dead vegetation.
- **HEAR** - A leaking pipeline might make a hissing sound you can HEAR.



If you notice any of these signs, do not try to stop or repair the leak yourself or use anything that might create a spark, such as smoking or a cell phone. Instead, leave the area immediately and then call **Dominion's 24 Hour Emergency number at (800) 535-3000** and **911** for emergency response. Wait from a safe distance for the emergency crew to investigate the situation and follow their instructions before returning to the area.

Since natural gas pipelines are underground, line markers are used to indicate their approximate location. They are typically located throughout pipeline right of ways, road crossings, fence lines and street intersections. Markers are general and not exact locators and do not tell how deep a pipeline is buried, nor do they necessarily indicate the number of underground lines. Pipelines do not always follow a straight course between two markers, so never rely solely on the presence or absence of pipeline markers. It is a federal crime to willfully deface, damage, remove or destroy a pipeline marker.

In December 2002, Congress enacted the Pipeline Safety Act of 2002. As a provision of the Act, new U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) regulations for natural gas transmission pipelines were published in 2003. The rule requires gas transmission pipeline operators such as Dominion to:

- Identify High Consequence Areas (HCAs), which contain segments of pipe that, in the event of a failure, could cause significant harm to life and/or property.
- Address hazards associated with unintended releases of natural gas.
- Perform ongoing assessments of pipeline integrity for the pipe within these HCAs.
- Identify potential threats to the HCA pipe segments and, using a comprehensive risk-analysis process, evaluate the threat.
- Improve data collection, data integration and analysis.
- Repair and remediate the pipeline as necessary.
- Implement mitigating actions.



Safety and compliance have always been a high priority for Dominion, so we embrace the USDOT Pipeline and Hazardous Safety Administration's (PHMSA) goals of improving pipeline safety and raising the public confidence in the natural gas industry. At Dominion our extensive integrity management program has been in place since December 2004. We continually evaluate our plan for effectiveness and for process improvement. Our employees maintain a commitment and dedication to ensure we operate our facilities according to the highest safety standards.

To learn more about the hazards associated with pipeline incidents or releases and about Dominion's damage prevention, integrity management and emergency preparedness programs, please contact me at [paul.r.briggs@dom.com](mailto:paul.r.briggs@dom.com) or visit [www.dom.com](http://www.dom.com) and enter ***Integrity Management Program*** in the search box.

Sincerely,

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