

Gas Pipeline Safety

Nova Energy is a leading retailer and distributor of natural gas who own and operate natural gas networks in Auckland, Hastings, Hawera and Wellington. Committed to achieving the safe uninterrupted supply of natural gas, the safety information contained in this sheet is designed to help maintain your safety, the safety of your work colleagues and the safety of the general public.

Natural gas is used in homes throughout the North Island for heating and cooking. It is also widely used for power generation and heating operations in industries such as dairy, timber, forestry, food, manufacturing, and chemical processing.

In its natural state natural gas is a colourless and odourless mixture of hydrocarbons extracted from underground gas fields. It is then compressed and transported through a high-pressure pipeline system to gas networks and industrial sites throughout the North Island for use.

For safety reasons before distribution to customers the characteristic gas odour is added to all gas in the network system in order to make it easily detectable. To stay safe around gas pipelines it is important that you:

- Contact Nova Energy prior to commencing excavations.
- Always follow Nova Energy instructions.
- Use the free information service.
- Follow safe operating guidelines.
- Never put yourself or others at risk.
- Keep up to date plans on site at all times.
- Never cover up an incident, it is safer and less expensive to repair problems when they occur rather later.

We also recommend that you obtain a copy of "Guide for Safety with Underground Services" from the Occupational Safety and Health service before beginning any excavation or work.

Gas networks emergency response guidelines

If you smell or hear gas escaping, seek help immediately and follow this guideline.

1. Do not operate electrical or communication equipment within the area.
2. Switch off machinery if safe to do so.
3. Evacuate the immediate area.
4. Remove all possible sources of ignition.
5. Call Fire Service 111.
6. Stay clear of the area until you are advised that it is safe.
7. Call the Nova Energy Emergency Line on 0800 NOVA 111 (0800 668 211)

Your call will be acted upon to and an Emergency Response Team will be sent to the site immediately. Trained personnel will make the area safe and isolate the gas supply if required.

Identifying underground pipelines

Underground gas network pipelines can be identified by:

- Obtaining and checking plans.
- Mark outs.
- Using a pipe locator.
- Checking for markers fixed onto kerbs.
- Checking for warning signs on poles, fences or boundaries.
- Locating all services by hand digging.
- In some areas yellow warning tape may have been laid above the service or main.



Consequences of damaging or rupturing a gas pipeline?

If you damage a gas pipeline it must be reported to Nova Energy so that any necessary repairs and safety checks can be undertaken without delay. Escaping gas can ignite and cause serious harm to life and property or the gas could accumulate in adjacent buildings, enter underground services and could result in an explosive mixture. Air can get into the pipeline and form an explosive mixture or the leak may cause disruption to gas consumers..

If you damage a gas pipeline you could be found liable under the Health Safety in Employment Act and fined or imprisoned. You may be also be liable for costs associated to the repair and consequential damage.

The safest method of transporting natural gas over long distances is by underground pipeline. Even though every precaution is taken incidents do occur and while most only result in minor damage to the pipeline, there is the possibility that injury, death, significant damage to property, and business interruptions may occur.

External interference is the leading cause of pipeline incidents, most commonly the use of excavation and thrust boring equipment.

Remember that it is an Occupational Health and Safety requirement to have plans on site for utility services in the vicinity of excavation works.

Section 19 of the Health Safety in Employment Act 1992 requires people working near a gas pipeline to take all practicable steps to ensure their own safety or prevent harm to any other person.

ANYONE, WHO DAMAGES A PIPELINE AS A RESULT OF UNSAFE PRACTICES, MAY BE FOUND IN BREACH OF THIS ACT AND LIABLE TO PROSECUTION BY THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH SERVICE.

Free information service

Prior to commencing work close to gas pipelines please contact Nova Energy and request information on the location of gas pipelines in the vicinity. We will provide **plans, markouts and third party supervision (when required) free of charge.**

Contact information:

For all plan requests, on site locations and general queries contact **Nova Energy on 04 917 8852.**

Safe operating practices

In order to stay safe it is important that when planning your work you contact Nova Energy to:

1. Obtain plans, request mark outs and other relevant instructions for the area.
2. When you get to within 500mm of the known Main or Service position, use hand tools only.
3. If running parallel to a gas main, dig pot holes, using hand tools to expose the line at intervals. Also watch for service connections coming off the main.
4. Where a strategic main has been identified Nova Energy will supervise all works in close proximity.

General information about our gas pipelines

Pressure

Mains pipe - Steel pipe - up to 20 Bar
- Polyethylene pipe - up to 10 Bar
Mains pipeline is generally buried at depths between 500mm and 1200mm.

Services pipe - All pipes up to 10 Bar
Services supply individual customers from the gas mains to an isolation valve, regulator and meter. Service pipes are generally buried between 450 and 600mm deep.

24hr Emergency number: 0800 NOVA 111