



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

Sheriff Curtis L. Landers
225 W. Olive Street
Newport, Oregon 97365
(541) 265-4277
Fax (541) 265-4926

TIP OF THE WEEK

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Contact: Sheriff Curtis L. Landers
(541) 265-0652
lcsheriff@co.lincoln.or.us

NATURAL GAS SAFETY

Natural gas is often used in commercial and residential settings. Some uses include heating homes or powering appliances such as stoves and grills. In some areas, natural gas is piped directly into your home similar to water and electricity. As with any plumbing system, leaks can happen. Some households also use generators or other natural gas-powered appliances during power outages or emergencies. There are some ways to keep you safer if you use natural gas at home or at work.

Natural gas can displace the air in a confined space which can cause:

- Headaches
- Nausea
- Carbon monoxide poisoning
- Suffocation

In its original state, natural gas is odorless, colorless, and extremely flammable. Gas companies add a chemical called mercaptan, or methanethiol, to make natural gas smell like rotten eggs. If it smelled like fresh baked cookies, that gas leak may not alert you to the problem, but instead leave you looking for dessert when you should be evacuating the building.

If you hear or smell a natural gas leak, there are some steps you should take:

- Do not use your cell phone, landline telephone, or other electronic devices.
- Do not light matches, use lighters, or generate any sparks.
- Do not use any electrical switches, even turning the lights off could create a spark inside the switch.
- Evacuate everyone from the area.
- Call 911 from a phone in another area or building away from the leak.
- Contact your natural gas provider.

If you smell natural gas or hear the hissing sound of a gas leak, it's always safest to leave the area immediately and contact your gas company. After a natural disaster, such as an earthquake, it could be several days or longer before they are able to reach your home. **DO NOT** turn off your natural gas unless you smell gas, hear the sound of gas escaping, or see other signs of a leak. Only turn it off if it is safe to do so.

Always have an emergency plan, evacuation meeting point, and ensure all household members know what to do if there is a gas leak. Check with your natural gas service provider to see if they have additional safety information and resources.

For more information and tips, visit our website at www.lincolncountysheriff.net and Like us on Facebook at Lincoln County Sheriff's Office – Oregon.

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