

SPOKANE COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 8

Standard Operating Procedures

120.03.01
SPECIAL OPERATIONS,
NATURAL GAS INCIDENTS



Adopted: 12/20/16
Reviewed: 11/09/22
Revised: 00/00/00
Approved: Lonnie J. Rash

Purpose: To guide Spokane County Fire District 8 personnel responses to natural gas incidents.

References: 120.02.02 Hazardous Materials

Procedure: Both natural gas fires and leaks are an emergency (code) response.

1. Natural Gas.

- a) Natural Gas is lighter than air and will rise.
- b) Flammable and explosive range: 5 to 15%.
- c) Ignition temperature: 1100° to 1200° F.
- d) Natural Gas contains up to 98% methane.
- e) Natural Gas is odorless. It has an odorant added to allow detection, but the odorant can be “scrubbed” out if it leaks up through the ground.
- f) Natural Gas is non-toxic. However, it does displace oxygen and therefore could cause suffocation.

2. Natural Gas Leaks and Fires.

a) Approaching the scene:

- i. Confirm that the gas company has been notified.
- ii. Eliminate sources of ignition near the leak.
- iii. Evacuate the area downwind.
- iv. If there is no immediate life threat, contact the gas company, protect the scene and await further instructions from the gas company.

b) Outside leaks with fire:

- i. Confirm that the gas company has been notified.
- ii. Check homes in the immediate area for natural gas buildup.
- iii. If homes in immediate area do not have gas buildup, allow the fire to burn off the gas as it escapes.
- iv. If homes do have a gas buildup, evacuate and extinguish fire to prevent additional explosions.
- v. Extinguish secondary fires remote from the gas fire.

c) Outside leaks without fires:

- i. Confirm that the gas company has been notified.
- ii. Evacuate the area for 200 ft. In all directions.
- iii. Approach area with the wind at your back.
- iv. Eliminate sources of ignition.
- v. Establish water supply by taking hydrant.
- vi. Pull protection lines.

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- d) Inside leaks without fires:
- i. Confirm that the gas company has been notified.
 - ii. Evacuate the structure.
 - iii. Shut off the natural gas at the meter using a spanner wrench. **Do not ever turn the gas on after it has been shut off.** Lock the meter in the “off” position with a District padlock.
 - iv. Ventilate the structure by opening doors and windows.
 - v. Eliminate sources of ignitions.
 - vi. **Do not create spark by turning on or off any electric switches or equipment.**
 - vii. Firefighters evacuate the structure until the gas company has checked the building.
- e) Inside leaks with fire:
- i. Confirm that the gas company has been notified.
 - ii. Evacuate the structure.
 - iii. Shut off the natural gas at the meter with a spanner wrench. **Do not ever turn gas back on after it has been shut off.** Lock the meter in the “off” position with a District padlock.
 - iv. Extinguish any remaining fire.