

# Washington Gas Contact Information

<b>Customer Services</b> (translation services available)	703-750-1000
<b>If You Smell Natural Gas</b>	703-750-1400
<b>Outside the Local Calling Area</b>	1-800-752-7520
<b>Automated Services Line</b> (24-hour self-service)	703-750-7944
<b>Telecommunication Relay Service/TTY</b>	711 1-800-735-2258
<b>Call Before You Dig</b>	811 800-552-7001
<b>Natural Gas Products</b>	703-237-HOME washingtongasliving.com
<b>Natural Gas Availability and Conversions</b>	converttonaturalgas.com
<b>Gas Theft Hotline</b>	703-750-4570
<b>Web Site</b>	washingtongas.com

This handbook is prepared and distributed in compliance with regulations of the Virginia State Corporation Commission. Rates and charges discussed are for residential customers only. All programs and charges listed in this book are those in effect at the time of printing and are subject to change. Call **703-750-1000**, for additional copies.

Este manual del cliente es disponible en español si lo solicita. Llámenos al **703-750-1000**, para obtener una copia.



1108-200K

Natural Gas. *Efficient by Nature.*



## Virginia

### Customer Handbook



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# Welcome to Washington Gas

Thank you for choosing to use natural gas.

We welcome our new customers and appreciate the continued opportunity to serve those who have been with us over the years. Washington Gas has been a vital part of the vibrant Washington area community and economy for 160 years.

Our primary focus is to provide safe and reliable natural gas service to you. We continually monitor and maintain our natural gas pipelines and respond to natural gas emergencies around the clock. We are committed to making continuous improvements and service enhancements for our customers.

We are committed to responsible corporate citizenship and understand that civic responsibility benefits all of us. Our employees volunteer thousands of hours on projects year-round, addressing health, education and the environment.

To assist you in understanding our services and policies, we're pleased to provide this customer handbook. It details natural gas safety, energy efficiency, convenient payment programs and much more.

You will find a number of ways to reach us in the Customer Services section of this handbook as well as on the back cover. We welcome your comments.

Thank you for the privilege of counting you among our many valued customers.

Sincerely,



Luanne Gutermuth  
Division Head, Consumer Services

## Giving Customers Choice

There are two key components to your natural gas service: the supply or actual natural gas product and the distribution or delivery of the gas. Customers can purchase their natural gas supply from Washington Gas or from any energy supply company. Retail energy suppliers serving residential and small commercial customers in Virginia must be licensed by the Virginia State Corporation Commission. Customer choice is voluntary.

As a regulated utility, Washington Gas must charge customers the actual cost of the natural gas supply they use. Licensed energy supply companies may have greater flexibility in what they charge you. They compete for your business and may offer price incentives that could result in cost savings to you.

If you choose an energy supply company other than Washington Gas, you will need to sign an agreement with that supplier for the terms of your service. If you wish to continue to buy from Washington Gas, no further action is necessary.

In response to state regulations, Washington Gas provides a list of customers to energy suppliers twice a year. Customers are notified through the Washington Gas newsletter of the opportunity to have their names removed from the supplier list.

**Regardless of which company sells you natural gas, Washington Gas continues to deliver the gas safely and reliably to your home through its distribution system and responds around the clock to natural gas emergencies.**

For more information and a list of energy supply companies that serve Virginia, visit [washingtongas.com](http://washingtongas.com), click on *Customer Choice* or call us at **703-750-1000**.

## Customer Services

### Contacting Us by Phone

Call us if you have questions, suggestions or concerns.

- Our main number is **703-750-1000**. Call Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (except major holidays). Commercial customers should call 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday, and Non-English speaking customers can call the same number for translation services in many languages.
- In a natural gas emergency, call **911** or Washington Gas at **703-750-1400** or **1-800-752-7520** at any time.
- If you live outside the local calling area, please call **1-800-752-7520**.
- For 24-hour automated bill payment and other self service options, call the *Automated Services Line* at **703-750-7944**.
- Hearing-impaired customers may reach us through the District of Columbia Relay Service at 711 or at **1-800-735-2258**.

Please see back cover for additional contact information. Our customer service representatives are available to answer questions about your gas bill or to schedule a service appointment. Please consider the following when you call us:

- Washington Gas schedules service Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- When you have scheduled service with us, Washington Gas will require access to your meter and the appliances inside your home. Please be available at the service location and phone number you have provided. If we miss an appointment and cannot

return on the same day, we will reschedule for the next available day.

**Note: Representatives of Washington Gas and other subsidiaries of our parent company, WGL Holdings, Inc., wear or carry identification and will present it upon request. If you have concerns about whether a worker in your area is from Washington Gas or is affiliated with its parent company, call 703-750-4370 or 703-750-4246 or Customer Service at 703-750-1000.**

## Contacting Us by Mail

Please address all correspondence — change of address, comments or questions — to **Washington Gas, Customer Care, 6801 Industrial Road, Springfield, VA 22151**, unless otherwise instructed. Your letter should include:

- a daytime phone number, including area code, where you can be reached;
- a brief summary of the inquiry or problem;
- your account number and address; and
- copies of gas bills and canceled checks if the question is about billing.

## Contacting Us Online

You also will find helpful information and many quick and convenient services at **washingtongas.com**. Click on *Contact Us* for inquiries related to your account and other services. Find information about customer services and policies, natural gas safety, energy efficiency and heating season preparedness. Manage your Washington Gas account by visiting the *Customer Service* section of the site.

# Meters and Meter Reading

Meters measure how much natural gas you use, and monthly bills are based on that usage. The date of the next scheduled reading appears on your gas bill, along with the current and past readings and dates. We test and replace meters in accordance with requirements of the Virginia State Corporation Commission. Washington Gas owns and maintains the gas meter and the piping leading to the meter from the street. It is your responsibility to provide easy access to the meter.

## Reading Your Own Meter

In some areas, if we are unable to gain access to your meter, we will leave a postage-paid meter reading card. If you receive one of these cards, please record the meter reading on the card and mail it to us the next day. Other options include calling us at **703-750-1000** with your reading or email it to us through our Web site. Click on *Customer Service, Manage Your Account, Report Your Meter Read*. If you have a digital meter, simply record the numbers displayed.

To read a meter with dials, please do the following:

- Starting with the left dial on the row of four, locate the dial hand and record the last number it has passed.
- If the hand is between two numbers, record the lower number. If one hand is directly over a number, record that number.
- Continuing to the right, follow the same procedure for the 3 remaining dials.



*The complete reading from left to right is 9587.*

## Remote Meter Reading

Many meters in our service territory are equipped with an automated meter reading device that combines radio and computer technologies to allow us to read your meter from a distance. Certain conditions can block the transmitted signal, and the meter reader may need to be closer to obtain the reading. Also, if your meter is equipped with this automated technology, we occasionally will require access for testing, replacement or repair.

## Estimated Readings

Sometimes it is necessary for us to estimate readings, especially if we cannot gain access to your meter or when the automated device is not transmitting. Bills are estimated using data on historical usage, actual weather and length of the billing period. The next time an actual meter reading is obtained, your bill will be adjusted for any difference between what you have been billed based on an estimate and the usage shown by the meter reading. You will know if your meter has not been read if you see “*Estimate*” after the words *Current Reading* on your gas bill. If you have a concern regarding the accuracy of your meter, please call us.

## Relocating Your Meter or Service Line

If you are remodeling and want your natural gas service line or meter moved, call us at least 8 to 12 weeks before the project starts. This gives us time to schedule a site visit and prepare a written estimate. The relocation fee will depend on the difficulty of the installation.

**Note: There is a \$72 fee for providing the estimate to relocate the meter.**

## Gas Theft

Tampering with a natural gas meter is ***illegal*** and ***dangerous***. The natural gas meter at your home, whether located inside or outside, belongs to Washington Gas. Call our *Gas Theft Hotline* at **703-750-4570** or the *Corporate Security* office at **703-750-4370** or **703-750-4246** if you see suspicious activity involving a Washington Gas meter. The company offers rewards for verified reports of illegal piping connections or stolen meters. You may leave a recorded message with your name and other contact information, but you are not required to identify yourself unless you wish to be considered for the reward.

## Your Gas Bill

### Billing Status

You may buy your natural gas from Washington Gas, which is the regulated utility, or from an energy supply company. Washington Gas delivers the gas through its system of pipes to your home no matter which company sells you natural gas.

- **Washington Gas Sales Service** customers buy gas from Washington Gas.
- **Washington Gas Delivery Service** customers buy gas from a retail energy supplier.

Sales Service customers receive one bill from Washington Gas. Delivery Service customers could be billed by either method as noted below and should discuss billing choices with prospective energy suppliers.

- **One bill.** This combines Washington Gas charges and the retail energy supplier’s charges (bill may be provided by Washington Gas or by the supplier).

- **Two separate bills.** Washington Gas sends the customer a bill for the System Charge, the Delivery Service Charges and the applicable taxes. The retail energy supplier sends the customer a bill for the natural gas commodity and any other applicable charges.

## Understanding Your Charges

Whether you buy your natural gas from Washington Gas or from an energy supply company, the following services are listed on your bill:

- **Distribution Service:** This covers the cost of transporting the natural gas through the Washington Gas system to your meter. The monthly *Distribution Charge* is based on the amount of natural gas you use (stated in therms on your bill). Your *System Charge* is a fixed monthly amount that covers certain costs of providing you service, including maintenance and repair of customer lines, depreciation, taxes and customer related expenses, such as meter reading and billing.
- If you buy gas from **Washington Gas**, you will see the abbreviation “*PGC*” on your bill. This *Purchased Gas Charge* includes the cost to purchase the natural gas supply, plus the expense of transporting it through the interstate natural gas pipeline system. By regulation, Washington Gas must charge customers what it pays for the natural gas supply they use and cannot profit by increasing the cost of the natural gas supply it sells.
- If you buy gas from an **energy supply company**, the price should be specified in your contract with that supplier.
- **Taxes:** Imposed by your local jurisdiction, taxes are collected by our company and remitted to the appropriate taxing authorities.

For billing purposes, your natural gas usage is expressed in therms. A *therm* is a measure of the heat energy in natural gas and is approximately equal to the heat content in 100 cubic feet of natural gas, or a *CCF*. Your meter reading (expressed in CCF of natural gas) and an energy content conversion factor determine the total number of therms you use. Other important explanations and customer information can be found on the back of your Washington Gas utility bill or at **washingtongas.com**. Click on *Customer Service*.

## Gaslights

Many newer gaslight installations are metered. Older gaslights may be unmetered and are billed at a fixed usage, itemized on the bill as Unmetered Gaslight. A typical two-mantle residential gaslight consumes about 219 therms annually. If you turn an unmetered gaslight on or off, please let us know immediately so we can bill you correctly.

## Rate Schedules

The billing items previously described are covered in rate schedules showing the amount the Virginia State Corporation Commission allows us to charge. Residential service is covered under Rate Schedules No. 1 and 1A. For copies of rate schedules and general service provisions, visit **washingtongas.com** and click on *Tariffs/Rates*, or call us at **703-750-1000**.

## Paying Your Gas Bill

### Payment Options

Please check your bill to make sure that the name and address on your account are correct. This helps us provide you more efficient service should there be any questions or concerns regarding your account. Please call **703-750-1000** with any changes.

**By Mail:** Return your remittance stub with your **check or money order**—*never cash*. Write your 10-digit account number on your check or money order for proper credit of your payment. *Do not include any correspondence with your payment or write on or make requests on the stub.*

When you pay your Washington Gas bill by check, you authorize Washington Gas to clear it electronically. Your check will not be returned to you. Your bank statement serves as proof of payment.

For questions about the electronic conversion of your check or to opt out of the electronic conversion and receive your paper check, have your 10-digit account number available and call 1-888-491-8107 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday.

If you send your payment in an envelope other than the one we provide, address it to **Washington Gas, P.O. Box 9001036, Louisville, KY 40290-1036**. Sending the payment to any other address will delay processing.

**By Phone:** Use our *Automated Services Line, 703-750-7944*, to pay your bill with your personal checking account, credit or debit card. When paying by check, you'll need your current Washington Gas account number, the bank's routing number and your checking account number, which are listed at the bottom of the check. The routing number consists of the first nine digits, and your checking account number is the second set of digits. Please do not use the last set of digits in the row—this is your check number.

**Online:** Log onto **washingtongas.com** to view or pay your current gas bill quickly and securely. Use your personal checking account, credit or debit card to pay your bill. Go online to most area banks' Web sites to view and pay your Washington Gas bill.

Go to **washingtongas.com/eBill** for billing and payment information. You also can view and pay your bill at **mycheckfree.com** or **washingtongas.com**.

If you pay your gas bill through an online banking service, be sure the account number you enter matches the 10-digit account number printed on your Washington Gas bill.

**Note: Credit and debit card payments are processed by an electronic payment processor, not Washington Gas. The processor currently charges a transaction fee of \$4.55 for this service. The fee may change without notice.**

**In Person: Washington Gas Main Office:** Pay by check, money order or cash at 101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20080, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

**Washington Gas Anacostia/Congress Heights Office:** Pay by check or money order only at 3101 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20032, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

**Drop Boxes: In Virginia**, a 24-hour drop box is located in the parking lot of our Springfield location at 6801 Industrial Road. **In Maryland**, use the 24-hour drop box available in the parking lot of our Forestville office at 4000 Forestville Road. **In the District of Columbia**, customers will find drop boxes at our main office and Anacostia locations. *Washington Gas accepts only checks and money orders at drop boxes.*

**Western Union:** You may pay your gas bill through the Quick Collect service at locations nationwide. Call Western Union at **1-800-325-6000** for the location nearest you and for applicable Western Union service fees.

## Dishonored Payments and Late Payment Charges

We charge a fee for a dishonored payment and require cash, certified check or money order for the amount of the dishonored payment and fee.

Payments are due on or before the due date shown on your bill. If we do not receive your payment by the due date, a late charge is assessed at the rate of 1 percent of the unpaid bill. If the bill remains unpaid, at the end of each nominal 30-day billing interval, an additional charge will be made equal to 1.5 percent of any total amount outstanding. Payments are applied first to any past due amounts.

## Payment Plans

The **Budget Plan** spreads the cost of winter heating over the entire year. We calculate your average monthly payment based on historical natural gas usage, adjusted for normal weather and projected gas costs. Periodically, we review your account to determine that our monthly estimate is on target. Each month, your bill will show actual gas usage and bill amounts, along with budget installments, so you can review the information.

If actual gas costs, weather and/or usage differ significantly from our original estimate, an adjustment in your monthly budget payment may be necessary to prevent significant charges or credits at the end of your budget year. You also may request an adjustment to your installment. You will receive a message on your bill if your monthly budget payment amount has changed.

Your 12th monthly bill will reflect the last budget installment of your budget cycle – adjusted for the difference between actual and budgeted gas usage. Overpayments are credited to your account unless a refund is

requested. If you use more gas than you pay for, you owe the company the difference.

The Budget Plan is designed as a 12-month program, and we encourage you to stay on it year-round to realize the potential benefits. Remember that continued participation in the plan depends upon your ability to make the monthly budget payment. A late payment or failure to pay typically results in removal from the plan, and the full amount of the account balance becomes due. For more information, or to enroll, click on *Customer Service*, then *Budget Plan* at our Web site, or call the *Automated Services Line* at **703-750-7944**. Please have your Washington Gas account number available.

Please call us if you choose to purchase natural gas from an energy supply company and want to participate in the Budget Plan.

The **Automated Payment Plan** allows your payment to be deducted automatically from your checking account and electronically transferred to us on the day your bill is due. At the Web site, click on *Customer Service*, then *Automatic Payment Plan* for program information.

The **Payment Extension Plan** can extend the due date for customers – usually individuals whose main source of income is a monthly government or pension check – who purchase gas from Washington Gas and receive their bills after the 10th of the month. With this plan, the due date (last day to pay without a penalty) of your current monthly gas bill is extended to the 5th of the next month, making it easier for you to apply a portion of your assistance payment to your gas bill. There is no late charge if the payment for your gas bill is received by the extended due date. For details, call us.

Remember that it is the customer's responsibility to notify Washington Gas as soon as possible if he or she is unable to pay for service in accordance with the requirement of the company's billing practices.

For more information about payment plans, click on *Customer Service*, *Manage Your Account* and *Customer Publications* at our Web site. Download the *Payment Plans* brochure, or call us.

## Service Initiation and Termination

### Applying for Service

Contact us by phone, postal mail or email to begin natural gas service. See the sections below for more details on initiating and terminating service.

### Protecting Customers' Information

Washington Gas protects customers' account information. It is shared only with the person whose name appears on the account, and only that person can authorize that a second name be added. Call the company if you wish to revise your account information. If you would like a spouse or relative to be able to access your Washington Gas account please contact our service representatives to have that their name added to the account.

### Security Deposit

A security deposit may be required to open or maintain an account depending on a customer's payment record. All deposits held for more than 90 days earn simple interest at a rate approved by the Virginia State Corporation Commission. After 12 months, Washing-

ton Gas refunds the deposit, plus interest, if the customer has established a satisfactory payment record.

**Note: Deposits cannot be used to pay a current or a delinquent bill.**

### Moving

- To initiate or discontinue service, please notify us at least 3 business days prior to the time you request service. There is a fee to initiate service. Access to your home is required to initiate or terminate service.
- If you have gas appliances with electronic ignition, your electric service must be on before we turn gas on to your appliances. If you have a gas water heater, your water must be on before we can light that appliance.
- For convenience, customers may go to our Web site to submit a secure online form to start or stop natural gas service at least 3 business days prior to date requested. Click on *Start/Stop Service* on our home page. A customer service representative will contact you if there are any questions or if we require access to your meter for a final reading. If you don't have online access, please call us. Failure to notify Washington Gas will prevent us from closing your account and you will be responsible for all subsequent charges until your account has been settled.
- If the new occupant placed an order with Washington Gas to leave the gas service on, you may read the meter and phone in your final reading to us.

**Note: If you move during the winter and the gas service is turned off, the water pipes could freeze.**

### Smooth Moves Program

This program features a written agreement between Washington Gas and property managers and/or

landlords that transfers a tenant's gas service to the landlord when a tenant informs Washington Gas that he or she is moving. Then, 48 hours before a new tenant is scheduled to occupy a unit, that tenant completes a "moving in" form, and there is no disruption in gas service.

Visit [washingtongas.com](http://washingtongas.com) to request your Smooth Moves enrollment packet. Once at our Web site, click on *Customer Service*, *Property Managers*, then *Transferring Tenant Gas Service/Smooth Moves* or call us.

### **Automatic Name Change Program**

This program features a written agreement between Washington Gas and property managers and/or landlords that transfers a tenant's gas service to the landlord when a tenant informs Washington Gas that he or she is moving. Then, 48 hours before a new tenant is scheduled to occupy a unit, the tenant completes a "moving in" form, and there is no disruption in gas service. Click on *Customer Services*, then *Property Managers* at the Web site to request your enrollment packet, or call us.

### **Emergency Turn-Off**

In an emergency, we may turn off your natural gas service without notice. We also do this if the gas meter has been tampered with or if there has been a violation of federal, state or local safety codes. We restore service as soon as possible, but if safety violations exist, your gas equipment must be repaired before service is restored.

### **Disconnection**

If you have trouble paying a bill or a security deposit, or if there is some other problem, please notify us.

We make every effort to work out a solution before we terminate natural gas service.

**Note: If you have received a disconnection notice and your gas is still on, please call Customer Service at 703-750-1000 or see a representative at a Washington Gas payment office to pay the agreed amount and avoid disconnection.**

Other than for emergencies and meter tampering as noted above, Washington Gas may disconnect a customer's natural gas service for failing to do any of the following after the appropriate notice has been given: comply with the company's requirement for service applications; pay a required deposit; pay a bill for gas service; and/or provide reasonable access to customer premises.

Before the company disconnects a customer's service for a reason other than an emergency or meter tampering, it will send the customer a written notice of termination on the bill at least 10 days before the date that termination is scheduled to occur. The cause for disconnection must be corrected and any past due amount must be paid on or before the termination date stated on the bill notice to avoid disconnection. The due date for the remaining current balance also is specified.

If gas service is disconnected, it can be restored when violations are corrected and outstanding bills are paid. A reconnection fee is charged and a deposit will be required prior to reconnection if your gas has been turned off for non-payment. Payment to restore service can be made in one of the following ways:

- Through our *Automated Services Line* at **703-750-7944** or online at [washingtongas.com](http://washingtongas.com), using your checking account, credit or debit card; (Be sure to call **703-750-1000** to provide the customer service representative your confirmation number.);

- In person at one of our walk-in offices for the exact amount due; or
- by mail.

Remember that you will need to contact Washington Gas at **703-750-1000** to set up an order to reconnect your service once your payment has been made. If you choose to pay by mail, the gas is not turned on until we have received the payment and it has been posted to the account.

**Note: Credit and debit card payments are processed by an electronic payment processor, not Washington Gas. The processor currently charges a transaction fee of \$4.55 for this service. The fee may change without notice.**

## Dispute Procedures

To dispute charges on your bill amount, please contact a customer service representative at **703-750-1000**, or **1-800-752-7520**. If you disagree with our findings, you may contact the **Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC)**, which regulates all utilities in the state, toll free at **1-800-552-7945**. Also, you can write to the SCC's Division of Energy Regulation, Manager of Consumer Services, P.O. Box 1197, Richmond, VA 23218. Visit the Web Site at **scv.virginia.gov**.

## Avoiding Turn-Offs for the Ailing, Disabled and Elderly

If a member of your household is seriously ill, disabled, elderly, relies on life support equipment or has any existing condition for which a termination service would be a threat to life, health or safety, we take special steps to avoid turning off your natural gas service.

Please inform us of these circumstances in advance, in the event that a turn-off is warranted. We require a

written statement from a doctor or an official source to prevent the turn-off. In addition, the customer must make satisfactory arrangements to pay the unpaid bills.

## Third-Party Notification

The **Third-Party Notification Program** can help you avoid a disconnection if you are out of town for long periods, ill or have difficulty handling your affairs. Washington Gas can send a copy of your disconnection notice to a third party of your choice. The third party is not responsible for payment but will be notified about the impending service disruption in time to help. Call us at **703-750-1000** for details.

## Safety

**If you suspect a natural gas leak or other gas emergency and are unsure of its severity or what to do, evacuate the area immediately and call 911 from a safe location.**

## If You Smell Natural Gas

Natural gas is non-toxic, colorless, odorless and combustible. For your safety, we add an unpleasant odorant called mercaptan so you will be able to detect escaping natural gas. Call us to receive our *Natural Gas Safety* brochure with a scratch-and-sniff sample of mercaptan. Gas traveling through a small portion of our transmission pipeline is not odorized. Visible signs of a possible leak are provided below.

- If you smell natural gas, do not attempt to locate the source of the odor. Call our *Emergency Leak Line* at **703-750-1400** or **1-800-752-7520** outside the local calling area.
- If the odor is very strong or you hear a blowing or hissing noise, vacate the building immediately,

leaving doors unlocked as you go. Do nothing that could create an ignition source — do not light a match or use any type of phone or battery-powered equipment. Do not turn electrical equipment or light switches on or off. Do not start your car or any type of motorized equipment. Call **911** and the appropriate Washington Gas emergency numbers as instructed above only *after* you have reached a safe distance away from the building or area. Follow the same precautions if you are outside and smell gas, hear hissing or blowing noises, see dirt being thrown into the air; fire coming from the ground or appearing to burn aboveground; water bubbling or being blown into the air at a pond, creek or river; or if you see a dry spot in a moist field or dead or dying vegetation on or near a pipeline right-of-way.

**We distribute natural gas through a network of underground pipes and service lines. If a leak should occur, it is possible for gas to migrate into buildings, including those without natural gas service.**

**Note: When calling us from another location to report a natural gas leak or other gas emergency at your home, please give the customer service representative the address or phone number where you can be reached, so we can gain unimpeded access to the house or other building if necessary.**

## **Responding to Your Call**

When notified of a natural gas leak, Washington Gas dispatches trained technicians to the scene 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If a leak poses an immediate threat, the technician will take quick action to make the area safe. If a natural gas leak does not pose an immediate threat, other corrective action will be scheduled for a later date. This prioritization process helps

the company maintain the safety of all its customers while allocating resources more efficiently, coordinating necessary work with customers' schedules and minimizing traffic disruptions.

## **Excess Flow Valves**

An excess flow valve (EFV) may reduce the consequences of a gas leak in the event of a break in the outside service line. EFVs are designed to shut down the natural gas flow to your home and reduce the likelihood of unrestricted gas flow from the broken line. Since January 1999, in response to government regulation, Washington Gas has installed EFVs at no additional charge on all new elevated pressure natural gas service lines that serve a single residence and in cases where elevated pressure service lines serving a single residence must be replaced. We can install an EFV on your existing natural gas service line if it serves a single residence. The cost will depend on location, time, labor and site restoration requirements necessary to install the EFV. Please call us for additional information.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

Washington Gas does not recommend that customers shut off natural gas service to their homes or businesses as a preventive or preparatory action in the event of an emergency. Washington Gas's natural gas distribution system is divided into sections that, in such an event, can be isolated from the rest of the system and shut down for repairs or as a safety precaution. If for any reason customers do shut off gas service to their homes or businesses, they should call us at **703-750-1000** to restore service.

**Customers should not attempt to restore natural gas service themselves.** Customers who want to

learn how to shut off natural gas service to their homes or businesses should contact a licensed natural gas contractor.

## Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, toxic gas, created when fossil fuels are not burned completely. CO-related incidents can involve car exhaust, blocked furnace/boiler vents and chimneys and improperly adjusted or inadequately maintained appliances.

Warning signs of CO in your home can include stuffy, stale air; lingering pungent odor; condensation on windows; back drafts from a fireplace, furnace or water-heating chimney; soot; yellow burner flames (except from natural gas fireplaces and logs); burner flames or pilot lights that flutter or keep going out. If you detect these warning signs, turn off the equipment, air out the building and call a licensed natural gas contractor to have the equipment inspected.

Symptoms of CO poisoning can include dizziness, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, headaches, ringing in the ears, blurred vision, stinging eyes and fainting. If you suspect CO poisoning, leave the building immediately to seek fresh air and call **911** from a safe location.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends that you place CO detectors outside bedrooms in each separate sleeping area. It recommends installing smoke alarms on each level of your house and inside every bedroom. For both types of devices, check batteries monthly and change them at least twice annually.

## Using Gas Appliances Safely

Many gas appliances have open burners. Older models also have pilot lights that burn continuously. It

is very important to keep the area around your appliances clear of *all* flammable objects and substances, particularly gasoline and any fuel containers, paints, adhesives, cleaning solvents and oily rags, which create a fire hazard.

In addition, any natural gas appliance located in a garage or similar location must be installed according to the applicable building code, so that all burners and burner ignition devices are at least 18 inches above the floor. Don't use or store flammable products, such as those mentioned above, in the same room or area where a water heater or any other gas appliance is installed.

Warning signs to check for in a gas appliance that can indicate carbon monoxide is being produced include a predominantly yellow flame, soot or a lingering pungent odor. (Carbon Monoxide, page 24).

Keep your gas appliance owner's manuals available and refer to them regularly. Some additional tips on the safe and efficient use of appliances are provided below:

- Have a licensed natural gas contractor perform an annual pre-winter check of your natural gas **heating equipment**—including furnaces, boilers and/or unvented space heaters. If you see or suspect something is wrong with your heating system, turn it off immediately and call a repair service.
- Clean or replace **furnace filters** every month during the heating season and every three months during the rest of the year to help your system operate properly and efficiently.
- **Range-top burners** or **ovens** should *never* be used for home-heating purposes. Continuous burning can lead to the production of carbon monoxide and create fire hazards.

- **Dryer exhaust piping** should be kept free of lint buildup. Heavy lint buildup in the dryer exhaust can cause a fire.
- Lowering the temperature of your **water heater** can prevent scalding accidents. *Do not* turn your water heater temperature above 120 degrees Fahrenheit. **Warm** or **Low** should be the appropriate setting on most water heater dials that do not have numbers.
- If you have an **automatic dishwasher** and the manufacturer recommends a Normal temperature setting for your hot water heater, ask your plumber about anti-scald devices for your shower and sink taps.
- When installing **gas logs** or **inserts** in a conventional wood-burning fireplace, special attention must be given to the manufacturer's specification for venting. Many log sets need a fully open chimney damper when burning, and some require direct venting to the outside.
- **Gas grills** must be lighted with the top open. A natural gas grill intended for outdoor use should never be used indoors.

For more information on the safe use of natural gas appliances and systems, click on *Energy Information* at the Web site. Scroll down to the *Safety* section. For free copies of brochures, call **202-624-6092**. Property owners and managers are welcome to call for multiple copies for their tenants at no charge.

## Making Appliances Safe

We respond immediately and without charge to any natural gas emergency, such as escaping gas or a malfunctioning appliance. As a result, we may be required to turn off gas service to your home or appliance. If your appliance requires repair or replacement, you will be advised to call a licensed natural gas con-

tractor. As with any major service or repair, you may wish to shop around to get the services and terms that are best for you.

## Pipelines and Damage Prevention

The Washington Gas system is part of a vast nationwide network of mostly underground pipelines that deliver natural gas. The company operates approximately 200 miles of **transmission** pipelines and thousands of miles of **distribution** pipelines. Transmission pipe carries natural gas at high pressures from gate stations, where gas enters the system, to regulator stations, where pressure is reduced for distribution to customers. Pipeline markers indicate the presence, but not the exact location or depth, of **transmission** pipelines in underground rights-of-way. Markers identify the fuel, operator and phone numbers you must call **before** digging or excavating. Less than half of Washington Gas's transmission pipe is in high consequence areas, where gas leaks could have greater consequences to health, safety and the environment.

**Distribution** pipelines deliver natural gas directly to customers and can cause serious injury if damaged by digging or excavating. The majority of buried distribution pipelines are **not** marked aboveground so it is critical to call **811** to have the lines located before you begin any digging or excavating. See below.

## Call 811 Before You Dig

**811** is the national **Call Before You Dig** telephone number that initiates the process of marking the underground utility lines in your yard or on your job. Your call to **811** will be routed to your local One Call Center — in the District of Columbia, Maryland or Virginia. Local One Call Center personnel then notify area utilities, such as Washington Gas, to mark the approximate

locations of buried utility lines with high-visibility safety paint and/or flags. The service is **free**.

Remember to call **811** at least **two full business days** – excluding weekends and holidays — before you are scheduled to begin any excavation, large or small. Please do not begin digging until the lines have been marked or cleared as “no conflict.” If in doubt, check with your One Call Center to be sure there are no underground utilities where you plan to dig. If for any reason you cannot connect to **811**, call **1-800-552-7001**.

## Gas Pipe Maintenance

Washington Gas owns and maintains all natural gas pipe *up to and including the gas meter*. We strive to provide safe, reliable service while making sure the gas pipe owned by the company is properly maintained.

It is your responsibility to monitor and maintain the natural gas lines *on your side* of the meter — whether or not they are visible. Therefore, have your gas lines checked periodically to prohibit corrosion or leaks and have them repaired by a licensed natural gas contractor if any unsafe condition is detected. Federal and state regulations and Washington Gas policy prohibit building an enclosed structure over a natural gas line. If you know or believe you have an enclosed structure over your gas line, please call **703-750-1000** to arrange for a safety inspection.

## Energy Assistance

### Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Washington Gas has supported the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) for many

years. Through this program, the federal government distributes funds to the states, which, in turn, give grants to qualified applicants to help them pay their energy bills.

### Virginia Energy Assistance Program (VEAP)

Virginia Energy Assistance Program (VEAP) is a federally funded assistance program that provides assistance to supplement the payment of energy bills. For more information on this and other energy assistance programs, call Virginia’s *Human Services Information and Referral Line* at **1-800-230-6977** or visit [www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/ea](http://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/ea).

### Weatherization Assistance Program

This program provides funds for qualifying families to help finance repairs and improvements to home heating and cooling systems and covers the cost of installing energy-saving measures in the home. For more information, call the statewide weatherization agency at **540-955-5630**.

### Washington Area Fuel Fund (WAFF)

Founded by Washington Gas and administered by The Salvation Army, the **Washington Area Fuel Fund (WAFF)** helps families who do not qualify for, or who have exhausted, government energy assistance. WAFF pays for *all* types of fuel to heat homes during the winter. Washington Gas pays the administrative costs of the fund so 100% of WAFF contributions go to those who need assistance.

WAFF assistance is available January 1 - May 31. Contact The Salvation Army at **1-888-318-WAFF (318-9233)** to receive details on the location and phone number for the office in your locality.

You can contribute to WAFF in the following ways:

- **Make a fixed monthly contribution using a pledge form.** The contribution will be included automatically in your monthly gas bill and you can cancel it at any time. Call us to obtain a pledge form. If you have pledged a fixed amount, please do *not* check the *Washington Area Fuel Fund* box on your gas bill.
- **Add a donation to your gas bill payment whenever you choose.** Simply check the box located on your gas bill stub, write in your donation amount and add that amount to your gas payment. It's a one-time contribution until you decide to donate again.
- **Contribute online at [waff.salarmydc.org](http://waff.salarmydc.org), or when paying your gas bill online or by phone.** Log onto [washingtongas.com](http://washingtongas.com), or call our *Automated Services Line* at **703-750-7944**.
- **Mail a contribution.** Make your check payable to WAFF and send it to P.O. Box 1999, Washington, DC 20013.

## Natural Gas Product Information

### Buyer's Guides

Although Washington Gas does not sell natural gas products, you can call **703-237-HOME (237-4663)** or **1-800-980-8881** to request information. Washington Gas publishes buyer's guides to provide information about the selection, purchase and installation of heating, water heating and other natural gas products for your home. Visit [washingtongasliving.com](http://washingtongasliving.com) to request or download our free *Natural Gas Products for Your Home* buyer's guide. Washington Gas highly recommends that all installations be performed by a licensed trade professional and that you check references.

## Virginia State Corporation Commission

All utilities in Virginia are regulated by the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC), Tyler Building, 1300 East Main Street, P.O. Box 1197, Richmond, VA 23218. The SCC approves our rules of operation, as well as rates and charges for natural gas service. You can contact the SCC toll free at **1-800-552-7945**.