

the Pilot

A newsletter for customers
of Clearwater Gas System **SPRING 2005**

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EDITOR'S NOTE: *Clearwater Gas System delivers gas service to thousands of homes and businesses throughout the Pinellas and Pasco County area. We are proud of our service reliability, which is in excess of 99.99%. But gas leaks still occur, caused primarily by third party excavators damaging our gas lines. This special edition safety newsletter will guide you in how to use gas safely, what to do in an emergency and how to maintain your gas appliances, safely and efficiently.*

Please review and share this information with your family, so that you can safely enjoy the benefits of reliable gas energy.



Home Safe Home

Gas energy is an exceptional fuel that heats homes, cooks food, heats water, lights pathways, dries clothes, powers vehicles and fuels power generation plants. Like any energy source, gas energy must be used with care and respect. As your community energy provider, Clearwater Gas is committed to maintaining the highest possible safety standards, which includes the safe operation of an efficient and reliable distribution system. Safety is everybody's business. You can ensure gas safety in your home by following a few simple tips:

Follow Your Nose

As an energy source, gas energy has an outstanding safety record. In their naturally occurring state, natural and propane gases are odorless and colorless. So that they can be detected easily, Clearwater Gas injects an odorant called mercaptan into the gas before it goes into the company's distribution system. Mercaptan gives off a foul, "rotten egg" smell that is highly concentrated so even the smallest amount of escaped gas can be detected.

Anytime you smell the odor of natural or propane gas, whether inside or outside, remember the following precautions to prevent sparking or creating a source of ignition.

- Don't operate ANY electrical switches.
- Don't use lighters, matches, candles or any other source of ignition and don't smoke.
- Don't start a vehicle in a garage or near any natural gas odor.
- Exit the building immediately

- and do not return until the problem has been investigated and corrected.
- Call Clearwater Gas System's 24-hour Emergency Hotline (from a neighbor's phone) at (727) 462-6633 to report a leak.

Call Before you Dig

It's Spring, a time when many of us start digging in our yard or garden. Please remember to take great care before digging or excavating near buried piping or utility lines. Florida Law requires homeowners and excavators to call Sunshine State One Call at (800) 432-4770 at least two full days prior to digging so that utilities may mark any underground facilities.

Store Flammables Safely

Never store or use flammables like gasoline or paint thinners in areas near possible ignition sources such as furnaces, water heaters, dryers, refrigerators or other appliances or vehicles. Invisible vapors from spilled or improperly contained flammables can travel great distances and may ignite from a small flame or spark.

With over 80 years of experience in the natural and propane gas utility business, Clearwater Gas prides itself on being a responsive, public-minded utility. We are committed to providing the highest level of safety. We strictly adhere to regulations set by the federal Office of Pipeline Safety, the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act and the Florida Public Service Commission, that regulates the operational safety of local gas distribution companies.

Weathering the Storm

Tips for securing your gas appliances during severe weather.

Last summer's busy hurricane season, with its frequent power outages and storm damage is still fresh in our minds. We are once again providing a few gas safety hurricane tips to help you prepare for the upcoming season that starts June 1st and officially ends November 30th.

If you have natural or propane gas appliances, Clearwater Gas recommends that you secure them properly prior to evacuating your home to ensure that you return to find your gas appliances in the best possible condition:

WATER HEATERS – Your water heater is probably one of the easiest appliances to access. Within six feet of the water heater you'll see the appliance service valve. Turn the valve to the "off" position, making sure that the handle is no longer in line with the piping, or refer to your owners manual for detailed instructions. If your water heater has a pilot light, you will need to relight it following the manufacturer's instructions, or call us to relight your water heater upon return.

RANGES & DRYERS – Turn off the gas flow to your range or dryer only if you can reach the service valve easily. Once your gas has been shut off, do not try to turn it back on. Do not attempt to move heavy gas appliances away from walls or other appliances in order to turn off the gas flow.

GAS GRILLS – If your outdoor gas grill has a convenient,

gotGAS?

Our natural gas lines run underground so you can count on natural gas service even when the power is out – and still enjoy some of the best comforts of home.

Hot Water Always
Since most natural gas water heaters don't need electricity, you still have hot water no matter how cruel Mother Nature has been. Even when the power's out.

Hot Meals
Don't let a storm keep you hungry. Although most new gas ranges have electronic ignition, they can easily be lit by hand. Be sure to follow the owner's manual.

Bright Lights
Outdoor gaslights stay on when all else goes dark.

quick-connect hose, just disconnect it and move the grill into a garage or shed. If you have a propane gas grill, shut the gas off at the tank and disconnect it from the grill. Move the grill inside and secure the propane tank in an outside location or tie down the tank to a strongly secured stationary object.

POOL OR SPA HEATERS – You should also turn off the gas flow to your pool or spa heater. If your heater has a pilot light, you will need to relight it upon return, being sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions.

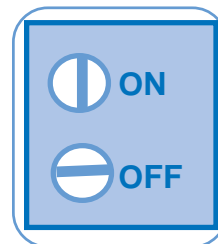
CLEARWATER GAS EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS	
Emergency Gas Leaks	(727) 462-6633
Appliance Service & Repair	(727) 562-4900, ext. 7419
Turn On/Off & Customer Billing	(727) 562-4600, Option 4
Gas & Appliance Sales	(727) 669-1958
Pinellas County Emergency Management	(727) 464-3800

In an emergency situation safety is imperative, and your safety is important to us. **For all gas emergencies, contact Clearwater Gas at (727) 462-6633.** Operators are standing by 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If you are required to evacuate your home and need assistance upon your return to relight your gas appliances, we'll be happy to help you. Please call our Service Department at (727) 562-4600, extension 7419, for scheduling and assistance.

Take severe weather warnings seriously and plan ahead to be safe! It's smart to create a disaster prevention plan in advance of serious weather conditions. For more information on disaster prevention plans, visit the National Hurricane Center's website at www.nhc.noaa.gov.

All gas appliances appliance service the flow of gas (lo-ppliance itself). If the in line with the gas the appliance. turned counter-pendicular to the the flow of gas is



are equipped with an valve, which controls cated close to the ap-handle of the valve is piping, gas flows to When the handle is clockwise until it is per-piping in a "T" position, stopped. If you are asked to evacuate your home, Clearwater Gas recommends that you turn the appliance service valve to the "off" position only at the appliance valve - do not attempt to turn off the gas at the meter.

Fact or Fiction?

Seven Common Myths about Natural Gas

Source: Florida Gas Transmission

1. Natural gas is explosive.

FALSE. Natural gas doesn't explode. It will ignite, but requires an ignition temperature of about 1200 degrees Fahrenheit. By contrast, gasoline ignites at about 600 degrees Fahrenheit.

2. Natural gas is toxic.

FALSE. Natural gas is non-toxic and cannot cause you to become sick, unless the gas is in such high concentrations that you cannot get enough oxygen to breathe.

3. Natural gas is heavier than air.

FALSE. Natural gas is lighter than air and when natural gas escapes, it rises and dissipates harmlessly into the atmosphere. Other gases, such as propane and gasoline vapor, are heavier than air and can collect in low-lying areas.

4. Natural gas is bad for the environment.

FALSE. Natural gas is the cleanest-burning of all fossil fuels. Normal by-products of natural gas combustion are water vapor and carbon dioxide. Using natural gas instead of coal or oil helps improve air and water quality.

5. Natural gas pipelines are dangerous.

FALSE. The National Transportation Safety Board reports that on average, 50,000 people die in car accidents in the United States each year, while fatalities and injuries from natural gas distribution and transmission pipeline related accidents are minimal (only 22 incidents in 2004).

6. Natural gas reserves are shrinking.

FALSE. Geologists and industry experts say there are 50-60 years of proven natural gas reserves and additional reserves are being discovered each year.

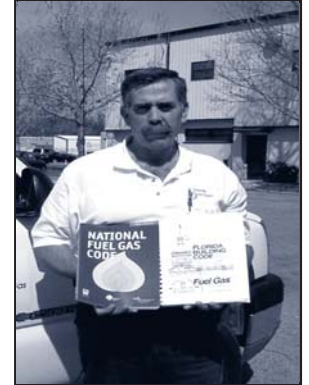
7. Natural gas stinks!

FALSE. Natural gas has no odor. As a safety precaution, Clearwater Gas adds a distinctive odorant called mercaptan so that if natural gas escapes, it can be detected.

State and federal pipeline safety regulations are tougher now than ever and today's pipelines are constructed of improved materials and better technology. Among all pipelines, natural gas pipelines have the best safety record. Clearwater Gas System has never had a transmission line failure in its 75-year history.

Gas Supervisor Serves on National Committee

Mike Deegan, South Operations Supervisor for Clearwater Gas System, has been appointed a principal member of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) National Fuel Gas Code Committee. As a committee member, Mike will review code amendments and how the amendments directly impact the gas industry nationwide.



Mike, a New York native, is a former employee of New York's gas system where he was responsible for installing extensive high-rise commercial gas applications. He relocated to Florida in the mid-1980s and has been employed at Clearwater Gas for the past 20 years. Mike is a registered plumbing contractor, natural gas contractor and a master qualifier of Liquefied Propane (LP) gas.

He currently serves on the Florida Natural Gas Association Codes Board, the Pinellas County Plumbing/Mechanical Appeals Board and the Pinellas County Gas Appeals Board. Mike is just one of many Clearwater Gas employees whose experience, professional qualifications and ongoing training contribute to our mission of providing safe, reliable natural and propane gas service.



IS NATIONAL GRILL MONTH. STOP BY THE ENERGY CENTER SHOWROOM FOR GREAT DEALS ON GRILLS. ALSO VISIT THE CLEARWATER GAS WEBSITE - WWW.CLEARWATERGAS.COM FOR SOME MOUTH WATERING RECIPES!

15 Gas Safety Tips for an Energy Efficient Home

- ✓ Teach children and family members about gas safety and what to do in case of an emergency.
- ✓ Keep combustibles such as paper, pot holders, towels, curtains, clothing and electric cords away from burners.
- ✓ Always keep a fire extinguisher in a convenient location in case of an emergency.
- ✓ Store all flammable liquids out of reach of children and away from ignition sources.
- ✓ Keep burners and the range top clean of grease build-up.
- ✓ Be sure to follow the manufacturer's installation guidelines for all gas-fired equipment.
- ✓ Schedule regular preventive maintenance checks for your gas appliances.
- ✓ Never use gas ranges for space heating.
- ✓ Never allow children to operate the burner control knobs on your gas range.
- ✓ Never cover your oven bottom with foil – it can restrict air circulation.
- ✓ Have your gas appliances serviced if the burner flame is not blue. A yellow flame means air inlets are clogged or burners need to be adjusted.
- ✓ Keep the area around your propane tank and natural gas meter clear of obstructions.
- ✓ To protect against tap water scalds, reduce the temperature of your water heater below 120 degrees.
- ✓ Use grills properly. Portable gas grills are intended for outdoor use and should never be used inside a home or garage.
- ✓ Post the Clearwater Gas Emergency phone number (727-462-6633) in a visible location.

NO OR LOW-COST WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY

- Wash only full loads of dishes and clothes.
- Take showers instead of baths to reduce hot water use.
- Lower the thermostat on your hot water heater; 115 degrees is comfortable for most uses.
- Turn off your home computer and monitor when not in use.

Source: Department of Energy

Carbon Monoxide Update

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless gas. It can be produced when combustion of any fuel – heating oil, gasoline, diesel fuel, propane, kerosene, natural gas, coal, or wood – takes place without sufficient oxygen. Under normal operating conditions, natural gas burns cleanly, producing heat, carbon dioxide and water vapor.

However, if natural gas isn't burning properly or the appliance has a mechanical problem, it could produce a hazardous gas. Incomplete combustion of gas produces carbon monoxide, which you can't see or smell. A couple of indicators of incomplete combustion can be a yellow flame (a blue pilot light is normal) or combustion odors and soot around the front of the furnace or water heater.

The presence of carbon monoxide inhibits the blood's capacity to transport oxygen throughout the body. Symptoms include: shortness of breath, dizziness, nausea, headaches, sleepiness, and drowsiness combined with other flu-like symptoms.

To prevent carbon monoxide exposure, you should have your heating system and or fuel-burning appliances inspected annually by a qualified professional or gas technician.



Tony Magganas named City of Clearwater Employee of the Year

Each year the City of Clearwater's Employee Achievement Committee recognizes a city employee whose character reflects the values of the City. On February 15th, the Committee named Clearwater Gas employee, Tony Magganas as the 2004 City of Clearwater Employee of the Year.

As Warehouse Supervisor, Tony has made several key improvements to our operations including reorganization and modernization of the warehouse inventory system. "Tony is always very responsive to our staff by providing repair parts and other materials required for supporting



our natural and propane gas operations," stated Tom Sewell, Clearwater Gas System's Operations Director.

Tony also supports other Clearwater Gas projects by assisting within the community. Most recently he oversaw the preparation and painting of the Clearwater Gas facility on North Myrtle Avenue. He also served as the team captain for Clearwater Gas during the 2004 Paint Your Heart Out community event. Tony single-handedly coordinated the entire volunteer effort including pre-preparation, procurement of supplies and supervision of the 20 volunteers who completed the job.

Tony's innovation, leadership and volunteer efforts make him an asset to the Clearwater Gas team and the City of Clearwater.

contact US

Gas Sales Showroom
(727) 669-1958, Clearwater
(727) 816-1253, Pasco

Service and Repair
(727) 562-4900, ext. 7419

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Gas Team Wins Award



Team Members: Manny Pandelos, Steve Miller, Dave Betts, Larry Leffler, Ron Hamm, Albert Craig, Ed Shannahan, Bob Caruso, Skip Grandi, Bob Jaeger, Joel Conklin, Shannon Fondaw, Mark Plyler, Randy Holm, Jack Coombs, John Moros, Dane Whitt, Tony Magganas, Betsy Foster, Pat Lafferty, Chris Hunter, Jim Jerkins and Mike Deegan.
NOTE: Ron Hamm was also named Employee of the Month for December

Twenty-three gas employees were presented the November/December Team Award by the City of Clearwater's Achievement Committee for excellent customer service during Hurricane Charley.

gas industry news

Energy Assistance Money comes to local areas.

The Florida Department of Community Affairs recently announced the award of \$28 million in Low Income Housing Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) Program Block Grant funds to 32 local agencies throughout Florida.

LIHEAP is a federal block grant program that assists eligible households with energy costs. For additional eligibility information visit www.dca.state.fl.us.

American Propane Gas Industry Contributes to U.S. Economy.

Propane gas is a \$35 billion industry in the United States and steadily growing. In 2002 (latest year that data was fully available), the U.S. consumed 19.9 billion gallons of propane for home, agricultural, industrial, and commercial uses.

Economically, the direct impacts of the propane industry total \$11.7 billion annually, while indirect economic impacts add an additional \$18 billion annually.

Keeping it Clean.

Environmental and energy groups have joined forces to keep more green in the world and in consumer's pockets by presenting a written statement to the National Association of Regulatory Commissioners urging public utility commissions to consider rate programs that reward utilities for encouraging energy conservation.

Propane Cleans up as a Poultry House Sanitizer.

U.S. poultry producers now have a new technology to control harmful

diseases using the efficient energy of propane to sanitize poultry house floors. The unique sanitation procedure effectively controls pathogens, reduces microorganisms and improves chicken and turkey liveability according to a recent Propane Association performance study.

Sources: *Desoto Sun Herald, American Gas Association and the National Propane Council.*



CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS APPLY. Coupons are valid only at the Clearwater Gas Showroom and must be presented at time of purchase. This offer may not be combined with other promotional offers. Call Clearwater Gas at (727) 669-1958 for further details. Prior sales excluded.

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