

# VILLAGES EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE

*Neighbors Helping Neighbors*

---

## Policy/Procedure

Rev. 9/2/19

**SUBJECT:** Gas Emergencies Outside of Building(s) and Residential Structure(s)

**POLICY:** It is the policy of The Villages EPC that if a serious event occurs involving a natural gas leak, in the open, due to seismic activity and no building(s) have active fire showing, **EPC personnel will follow the instructions of the First Responders, the Authority Having Jurisdiction. The procedures below are to be used only under the specific direction of the First Responders.**

**PERSONS INVOLVED: EPC Team:** Chair, Co-Chair, Directors of Security, Medical, Communications, Sector Chiefs and Area Reps.

**FORMS/DOCUMENTS:** List of EPC Directors and Sector Chiefs  
Map of Sectors and Residents' Addresses  
by Village and Sector  
Area Damage Assessment Form  
Sector Damage Assessment Form  
EPC Aid Station Locations

**ANY GAS LEAK IS  
DANGEROUS AND  
PRESENTS A RISK  
TO THE SAFETY OF  
ALL THOSE  
NEARBY.**

### PROCEDURES:

**The procedures below are to be used only under the specific direction of the First Responders.**

1. During their assessment of damages in their respective areas, the Sector Chief(s) and/or Area Reps may receive reports of or detect the presents of Natural Gas in an area. If the source is out in the open and not within a building approach upwind (wind at your back) and/or upgrade (from higher position). These maybe Transmission, Distribution or Service lines (buried pipe below gas meter shut-off valve). Only PG&E can shut off these lines.
2. Sector Chief(s) will advise the leaders in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) of situation and confirm that PG&E has been contacted. Sector Chief(s) shall direct Area Reps to start immediate precautionary evacuation 330 feet (100 meters)\* in all directions. If safe to do so, evacuation should start from the residence(s) closest to leak going outward from that point. Security Team should be tasked with maintaining this exclusion zone.
3. During evacuation, all personnel in the area should avoid using Radios, Phones, Flashlights, Doorbells, Light Switches, Garage Door Openers that could cause accidental ignition of unburnt gas.
4. If leak is burning, **DO NOT TRY TO EXTINGUISH!** Gas is invisible and may migrate near an ignition source, burning gas means leak and location are visible.

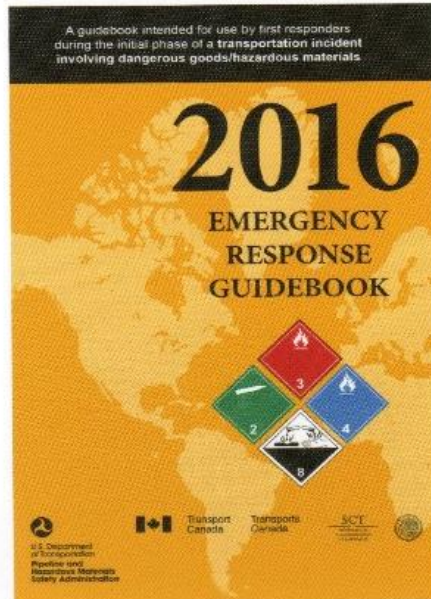
**Note:** Person(s) exposed to Natural Gas may experience dizziness and asphyxiation (lack of oxygen) without warning and gas may be irritating if inhaled in high concentrations. Remove self and/or victims into fresh air; remain upwind and upgrade from leak. Contact Medical Group

\*Dept. of Transportation, 2016 Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG) and PG&E "Handling Gas and Electric Emergencies" A Reference Guide for Community Members

# Minimum Evacuation Distances

## Distribution gas leaks

Federal Department of Transportation's Emergency Response Guidebook recommends "as an immediate precautionary measure for flammable gases to isolate the spill or leak **at least** 330 feet [100 meters] in all directions."



Also available as an app for smart phones and as a downloadable PDF online.

# Safety at the Scene

## DO

- Secure the area and keep the public away
- If necessary, evacuate public to safe distance
- Confirm that PG&E has been contacted
- The gas supply must be shut off **ONLY** if it is safe to do so
- **ONLY** PG&E personnel should turn gas ON



You should turn off the meter from outside the building if you smell or hear gas or you see dials on the meter showing gas is flowing even though appliances have been safely turned off.

## DON'T

- Don't extinguish a gas fire; let it burn because extinguished gas is invisible and may migrate near an ignition source
- Don't operate main shut-off valves
- Don't use unauthorized line stoppers or pipe squeezers to shut off gas supply
- Don't park over manhole covers, sewers or vaults

# Gas Leak Detection



## Sight

- Dirt being blown into the air
- Dead or dying vegetation
- Flames coming from the ground
- Continuous bubbling in puddles
- Construction/excavation equipment
- Signage or pipeline markings



## Sound

### Roaring sounds:

- **Transmission**—very loud (jet engine or locomotive)
- **Distribution**—loud from several hundred feet

### Hissing and whistling sounds:

- Service and appliance releases

**CAUTION!** There may be no perceptible sound.



## Smell

- Mercaptan odorant smells like sulphur, or rotten eggs.

**CAUTION!** Odor fade may occur.

Odor may fade if gas filters up through soil. Prolonged exposure to gas may diminish one's ability to sense the presence of the odorant. Odor may also be masked by other odors.

Odor fade can occur with new pipe when the odorant adheres to the surface of the pipe, effectively removing the odorant from the gas.

**CAUTION!** Some or none of these factors may be present. If unsure, do not approach area.

**Call PG&E at 1-800-743-5002**