



Take it from a pro: Your gas pipe is worth protecting

For the average homeowner, there's a lot of home maintenance and care to remember. Monthly maintenance and seasonal tune-ups are easy enough to remember. But the maintenance and upkeep of other critical systems – including your electrical systems and interior gas lines – are too important to forget. In harsh climates like Minnesota, the vast majority of homes are heated by natural gas. And it's likely that several different types of gas piping make their way throughout your house. Here in Minnesota, the piping will most likely include black iron pipe.

"From 1907 to the late 1970s, builders used black iron pipe to get natural gas into your home," according to Chris Palermo, a CenterPoint Energy technician who is training for his pipefitting license.

Black iron pipe was used, and still is used in some homes, because of its durability. But, Palermo continues: "The main problem with black iron pipe is that it is prone to leakage where two pipes connect at a coupling, an elbow or a union. Other places that are especially susceptible are connections behind any natural gas appliance."

CenterPoint Energy is only responsible for fixing and maintaining the pipes up to the meter. The homeowner is responsible for maintenance and if

necessary, repair, of gas lines inside the home. "When it comes to black iron pipe, it isn't if the pipe connections will leak, but when," says Palermo.

I have black iron pipe and my home is fine. I can't smell anything!

You can have a small leak without realizing it. When a small natural gas leak occurs in a home, the owner may only smell it initially. Over time, our noses can develop Olfactory Fatigue or sensory fatigue. This is when our nose becomes accustomed to a smell. CenterPoint Energy technicians sometimes find leaks in the course of servicing appliances because they are trained to find them.

What happens if I suspect a gas leak.

If you smell gas or suspect a gas leak, leave the area immediately on foot. **Do NOT** use your phone, garage door, electric switches, computer, or anything that could cause a spark. Go directly to a safe location in a nearby home or building, and then call 911 and CenterPoint Energy at 1-800-296-9815 or 612-372-5050.

If CenterPoint Energy finds a leak in your pipes inside your home, they are required to shut off your gas immediately to keep you and your neighborhood safe. Palermo explains, "We can't leave gas leaking, even when it's 20 below outside."



How can I get my pipes fixed?

A licensed plumber or pipe fitter can work on your natural gas pipes. They should be properly trained. CenterPoint Energy technicians are required to undergo extensive training and must earn their pipefitter licenses once they have completed their apprenticeships.

Plan now to save later

The expense of fixing these pipes may or may not be covered by your home insurance and can be costly. The best way to achieve peace of mind is to enroll in **CenterPoint Energy's Home Service Plus Pipe Protection Plan for \$3.95 a month**. The Pipe Protection Plan (PPP) will cover fixing the affected areas on the pipe including all labor and parts. If you know you have black iron pipe in your home, it's an easy choice.



Old black iron pipe, which was used to deliver natural gas to homes from 1907 to the late 1970's.



New black iron pipe, which is still used in some homes because of its durability.



It won't happen to me: a tale of two customers

"A Minneapolis customer wasn't covered under Home Service Plus® PPP services," Palermo recalls "We came out to initially make the leak safe. They decided they wanted one of our competitors to do the work because they didn't have a priority service plan with us. A single union had to be changed out in the pipe, and the competitor charged the customer \$1,200.

"In another case, an HSP technician found four leaks in a Minneapolis customer's basement. We made the leaks safe, then came back the same day to fix the issue. The job took three hours and could have easily cost the customer \$1,000-\$2,000 with our competitors. But because they had the coverage for **\$3.95 a month**, they had no cost for labor or materials."

Enroll in HSP's Pipe Protection Plan by calling **612-342-4610 in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area**; toll-free **877-477-1664 in Greater Minnesota**.

As always, if you smell gas or suspect a gas leak, leave the area immediately on foot. Do NOT use your phone, garage door, electric switches, computer, or anything that could cause a spark. Go directly to a safe location in a nearby home or building, and then call 911 and CenterPoint Energy at 1-800-296-9815 or 612-372-5050.



Gas Safety is Everyone's Responsibility.