



NEWS RELEASE

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Natural Gas Utilities Advise the Importance of Safely Clearing Heavy Snow and Ice Build-Up from Gas Equipment and Appliance Vents

Needham, MA, February 13, 2015. The natural gas distribution companies serving the Northeast U.S. are urging customers and the general public to be aware of the risks posed by heavy snow and ice build-up around natural gas equipment and of the importance of safely clearing this snow and ice build-up.

The accumulation of snow and ice increases the potential for damage to meters and regulators and other aboveground pipe components. Incidents can occur on natural gas equipment related to either the stress of snow and ice or due to ice blockage of gas appliance vents or chimneys. Exposed piping at meters and pressure regulators, and at propane tanks, are at greatest risk. Damage may result from the stresses imposed by the additional loading of the snow or ice. Damage to facilities may also result from the impact of snow or ice falling from roofs, ice forming in or on meters and regulators preventing their proper operation, or shoveling snow from roofs to protect dwellings from abnormal snow accumulation on to gas or propane equipment and appliance vents.

We are reminding residents and businesses in structures that use natural gas of the need for caution associated with excessive accumulation and removal of snow and ice. Attention should be paid to the following:

1. There is a need to clear snow and ice from exhaust and combustion air vents or chimneys for gas appliances to prevent accumulation of carbon monoxide in buildings or prevent operational problems for the combustion equipment. Properly functioning carbon monoxide detectors should be deployed in the building.
2. Pay attention to snow and ice related situations that may cause operational problems for meters, pressure control and other equipment. This equipment may contain vents that release gas safely outdoors in the event of a malfunction. If these vents are blocked an unsafe condition could result.
3. The piping on service regulator sets is susceptible to damage that could result in failure if caution is not exercised in cleaning snow from around the equipment. Where possible, use a broom instead of a shovel to clear snow off regulators, meters, associated piping, propane tanks, tubing, gauges or other related equipment.
4. Leave the building vicinity immediately if you detect a gas odor, then, from a safe location, contact the gas company or designated emergency response official if there is an odor of gas present, or if gas appliances are not functioning properly.

NGA is a regional trade association that represents natural gas distribution companies, transmission companies, liquefied natural gas importers, and manufacturers and suppliers to the industry. These companies provide natural gas to approximately 10 million customers in eight states (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont).