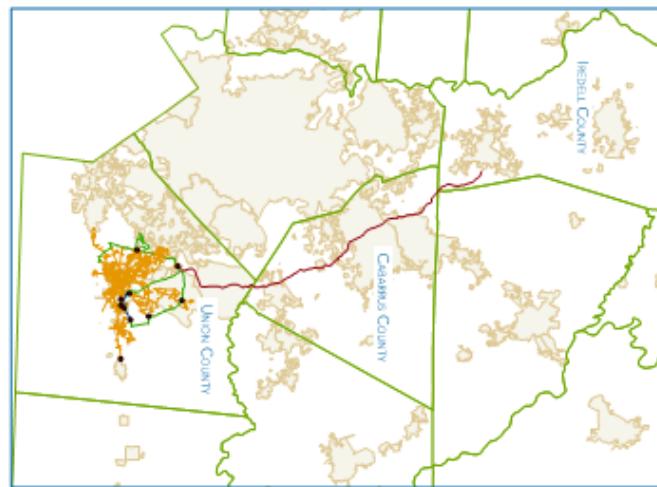




## Excavator Awareness



**Monroe**  
North Carolina  
City Of Monroe  
Natural Gas Division  
PO Box 69  
Monroe NC 28111



## Excavator Damage Prevention

### Pipeline Purpose and Reliability:

As a natural gas operator operating in your community, public safety is our highest priority.

The City of Monroe transports natural gas to approximately 11,000 customers in Union County with facilities including the Monroe Midland-Mooresville transmission pipeline that initiates in Iredell County.

According to federal statistics, pipelines are the safest and most environmentally friendly form of energy transportation in use today. However, the possibility of accidental contact during excavating, or other construction activity still remains.

### Facts About Natural Gas:

Natural gas is odorless, colorless, and tasteless. To aid in leak detection, natural gas is odorized with a harmless additive to give it a pungent odor similar to that of rotten eggs or sulfur. This distinct odor is designed to alert people to the presence of natural gas before it accumulates in potentially dangerous concentrations.

Natural gas is nontoxic and lighter than air. When it's released into the atmosphere, natural gas will rise and dissipate quickly, but when released within a confined space, it can accumulate, displace the oxygen, and lead to suffocation.

Natural gas is flammable. When mixed with the proper amount of air and once exposed to an ignition source, it will ignite. This characteristic makes natural gas a valuable source of energy; however, it's also what makes it dangerous if not handled properly.

### Hazard Awareness and Prevention Measures:

The City of Monroe Natural Gas Department's highest priority is the safe and reliable delivery of natural gas to its customers. Therefore, we rigorously test and inspect our pipelines and provide regular safety communications to the public. These efforts are standard practices and integral to the integrity of our pipelines and the safety of the people who live and work around them.

Coordination, communication, and cooperation between excavators, and utility owners can reduce the risk of damage to utility facilities. Therefore an excavator should call North Carolina 811 for underground utility locates at least three working days in advance of digging. This is the most important step to ensure the safety of both the public and the excavator's crew.

### Look for Signs of Underground Pipelines:

Natural gas pipelines are often identified by markers placed at intervals along the pipeline right of ways. Markers warn that a pipeline is located in the area, identify the product transported in the line and provide the name of the pipeline operator, and a telephone number to call in the event of an emergency.

While the markers are very helpful to indicate the presence of pipelines in the area, they don't show the exact location, depth or how many pipelines are located in the right of way. Also, be aware that pipelines may not follow a straight line between markers and may not always be marked. The absence of a pipeline marker does not mean that an underground pipeline may not be present.



# Excavator Damage Prevention Guidelines

## Consider Posting this Important Information

### 1. Call Before You Dig

State law requires excavators to call North Carolina 811 (NC 811) at 811 or 1-800-632-4949 at least three full working days (excluding weekends and holidays) before beginning any excavation work. At no charge, NC 811 will notify all member utilities, including the City of Monroe Natural Gas Department. Upon notification, City of Monroe Natural Gas Department will send a representative to locate and mark underground natural gas facilities.

When an excavator's locate request is received by NC 811, utilities have three full working days to mark their underground facilities. According to NC 811 the waiting period starts from 11:59 PM of the business day the locate request was received, and excludes weekends and holidays. For example, if you want to dig on Friday, you should submit your locate request to NC 811 on Monday.

Locate markings are valid for 15 business days starting on the day you call in the locate request. You should call NC 811 on the 12th business day to request a new locate if you are not sure that your work will be complete by the end of the 15th business day. In the event the markings are destroyed before completion of your work, you should call NC 811 to request a new locate.

Remember, calling before you dig doesn't cost a thing, but not calling could result in property damage or serious injury. So make the call, and remember these four simple steps:

- Call NC 811 at (811)
- Wait for the site to be marked
- Respect and maintain the marks
- Dig with care



### 2. "Give Us a Hand" Around the Buried Facilities

Before you can safely cross or work in close proximity to an underground utility, you must first verify its depth. Flags and locator marks tell you the direction the utility is running, but not how deep it is buried. Use proper hand digging tools and techniques to safely verify the depth of any buried utilities in close proximity to your planned excavation. The only way to be sure of utility depth is to physically expose it.

When working within the utility marking tolerance zone, use hand digging or vacuum excavation techniques to spot and expose pipelines and other underground utilities. In North Carolina, the tolerance zone is 24 inches on either side of the outside edge of the utility locate marks. Excavators are responsible for finding and avoiding all facilities down to the depth they are working.

### 3. Protect Exposed Facilities

Notify the City of Monroe Natural Gas Department whenever gas facilities are exposed. Adequate support must be provided for facilities including, but not limited to, shoring, temporary bridging, suspension supports, and proper backfilling under and around facilities. The City of Monroe Natural Gas Department can suggest methods for the design of support facilities.

### 4. Blasting

Whenever blasting may be necessary, make sure the City of Monroe Natural Gas Department is aware so special precautions can be taken. Explosive detonations near our pipelines are not permissible without engineering analysis and written approval from the City of Monroe Natural Gas Department. If approved, the City of Monroe Natural Gas Department representatives may be required on site to monitor blasting activities and perform leaks surveys before and after the blast.



### 5. Damaged Facilities

Notify us immediately at 704-282-4600 if you make contact with a City of Monroe Natural Gas pipeline, no matter how minor the damage is. The damage at the point of contact may appear slight or unnoticeable, but may have placed stress on the pipeline, damaged protective coatings or caused damage elsewhere in the facility. Do not try to fix or repair the damage. Do not cover it or hide it.

As soon as we're notified, a City of Monroe Natural Gas Department representative will be dispatched to inspect the damage and make or arrange for any repair(s) that may be necessary.

### 6. Know the Warning Signs for Gas Leaks

- Dirt blowing from the ground into the air
- Continuous bubbling or water being blown into the air at a lake, river or any wet area over or near a pipeline
- Fire coming from the ground or an explosion near a pipeline
- Dead or discolored vegetation in an area of otherwise healthy vegetation
- Unusual noises coming from your or our gas equipment
- A hissing, whistling or roaring sound along or near a pipeline
- A pungent odor similar to that of rotten eggs or sulfur

### 7. Leak Response

- Eliminate any source of ignition from the area. Do not turn on a light switch, light a match, start or stop an engine, use any type of phone or operate anything that may create a spark
- Leave the area immediately and move to a safe location upwind of the leak
- Warn others to stay away
- Call the City of Monroe Natural Gas Department at: 704-282-4600 and 911 from a safe location
- Do not attempt to repair a leak
- Do not attempt to operate pipeline valves
- Do not attempt to extinguish a natural gas fire

### How Can You Learn More?

To learn more about natural gas safety or damage prevention, please visit the following Web sites:

The City of Monroe Natural Gas Safety and Public Awareness Information: <http://energy.monroenc.org/energy-services/natural-gas/natural-gas-safety-public-awareness/> or call: 704-282-4600

US D.O.T. Office of Pipeline Safety: [www.phmsa.dot.gov](http://www.phmsa.dot.gov)

North Carolina 811: [www.nc811.org](http://www.nc811.org)

Common Ground Alliance: [www.commongroundalliance.com](http://www.commongroundalliance.com)