



FIRE DEPARTMENT

NATURAL GAS

There are more than 60 million households in the United States that use natural gas. Natural gas is used for a variety of things such as heating water, cooking food, clothes dryers as well as heating the home itself. If used correctly natural gas is both safe and very reliable but if not used correctly can be very dangerous. Natural gas in its natural state is colorless and odorless. So why can you smell it? It's simple; gas companies add a chemical to it called mercaptan to give it the sulfur-like or rotten egg smell. Natural gas is a mixture of gases that formed from the fossil remains of ancient plants and animals buried in the earth. Methane is the main ingredient of natural gas. Because of its ability to burn cleaner, hotter and brighter than other fuels this makes natural gas a popular fuel choice. It is lighter than air and dissipates quickly into the air making accidental combustion difficult, but don't take this lightly, because it can still combust so if you smell it in your home get out right away. Natural gas has a high ignition temp of almost 1100 degrees, twice that of gasoline but when it does ignite it ignites explosively and it only takes a tiny spark to do this like that from a phone or other appliance. Older appliances use a continuously burning pilot light while newer ones other than hot water heaters have an electronic ignition. If a burner or a pilot light goes out, shut off the gas and let the gas dissipate than light the match first and then slowly turn the gas back on. If you do not feel comfortable doing this have your local gas company do this. Remember if you think you smell it in your home leave immediately and call 911 from a neighbor's home.

If you smell natural gas in your home:

- Do not attempt to locate the gas leak
- Leave the structure immediately and do not reenter until the fire department and gas company says it is safe

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- Do not turn any switches, appliances or lights on or off and do not unplug anything
- Do not use your telephone to call 911 and if you are on the phone when you smell it, do not hang up the phone lay it down and leave immediately
- If there is an elevator in the structure do not use it
- Do not position or operate vehicles or power equipment where leaking gas may be present
- Do not smoke or use lighters, matches or other open flames


!DANGER!

Certain Older Gas Connectors May Be Dangerous

Gas connectors are corrugated metal tubes used to connect gas appliances in your home to fuel gas supply pipes. Some older brass connectors have come apart, causing fires and explosions resulting in deaths and injuries.

These older brass connectors have a serious flaw in how their tubing was joined to their end pieces. Over time, the end pieces can separate from the tubing, and cause a serious gas leak, explosion, or fire. To our knowledge, these dangerous uncoated brass connectors have not been made for more than 20 years, but many of them are still in use. The older these connectors get, the greater the possibility of failure.

Although not all uncoated connectors have this flaw, it is very difficult to tell which ones do. Therefore, **any uncoated brass connector should be replaced immediately** with either a new plastic-coated brass or a new stainless steel connector. Connectors can wear out from too much moving, bending, or corrosion. Connectors should always be replaced whenever the appliance is replaced or moved from its location.

 **WARNING: Only a qualified professional should check your connector and replace it if needed. Don't try to do this yourself!**

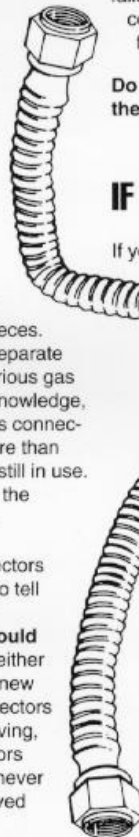
Moving the appliance, even slightly, whether to clean behind it or to inspect its gas connector, can cause the complete failure of one of these older weakened connectors, possibly resulting in a deadly fire or explosion.

Do not move your appliance to check the connector!

IF YOU SMELL GAS

If you suspect a gas leak:

- Leave the house immediately.
- Don't use your phone; call your gas supplier or the telephone operator for assistance from a neighbor's house.
- Don't light a match.
- Don't turn on a light.
- Don't switch on anything electrical.



"I remember Muscatine for its sunsets. I have never seen any on either side of the ocean that equaled them" — Mark Twain