

# INFORMATION ON NATURAL GAS ODORANT



## An important safety bulletin from CenterPoint Energy



The purpose of this notice is to provide contractors who work on natural gas piping, appliances and equipment and customers who desire more information with additional safety information on natural gas odorant and the potential for odor fade in certain rare circumstances.

**CenterPoint Energy adheres to United States Department of Transportation (DOT) rules and regulations regarding the odorizing of natural gas.** Even though a distinctive odor is added to natural gas to assist in the detection of leaks, you should not rely solely on your sense of smell to determine if a gas leak exists or if natural gas is present. Some persons may not be able to detect the odorant because they have a diminished sense of smell or olfactory fatigue, or because the odor is being masked by other odors in the area. In addition, certain rare conditions such as odor fade may cause the odorant to diminish so that it is not readily detectable.

**Odor fade (loss of odorant) may occur** when the level of odorant in the gas is reduced due to physical and/or chemical processes including adsorption, absorption and oxidation. In gas piping systems, odor fade may occur predominantly in installations of new pipe rather than in existing pipe. It can be more pronounced in new steel pipe of larger diameters and longer lengths. However, it can also occur in plastic pipe and in smaller and/or shorter pipe installations. New pipeline installations or additions of new piping segments may require the conditioning of the pipe before it is placed in service to prevent occurrences of odor fade.

**If a natural gas leak occurs underground, certain soil conditions can cause odor fade.** Other factors that may cause odor fade include: the presence of rust, moisture, liquids, or other substances in the pipe; and gas composition, pressure, and/or flow. Intermittent, little or no gas flow over an extended period of time can occasionally result in the loss of odorant until gas flow increases or becomes more frequent. Many appliance manufacturers include information in their installation manuals regarding the potential for odorant fade.

**Do not purge the contents of a gas line into a confined space.** Purging of a gas line should only be done by a licensed, qualified professional and should be done in a well-ventilated area or by venting the contents to the outside atmosphere. Always use gas detection equipment during purging operations or when otherwise working on gas piping systems to ensure that no natural gas is present that may result in a combustible or hazardous atmosphere. DO NOT rely on your sense of smell alone to detect the presence of natural gas. Consult your local plumbing code, mechanical code, fuel gas code and/or your department of building and safety for more information. When installing gas appliances or equipment, the manufacturer's instruction manual should be followed in accordance with the local code authority.

**For additional information on natural gas safety, please visit [CenterPointEnergy.com](http://CenterPointEnergy.com).**