

# Virginia Natural Gas Prepares for Hurricane Florence

## Reminds Customers of Natural Gas Safety Tips to Ready for Storm

**VIRGINIA BEACH, Va.** – Sept. 11, 2018 – With the safety of the public, its employees and its pipelines at the forefront, Virginia Natural Gas is closely monitoring the progress of Hurricane Florence and how it may impact service operations and customers. Virginia Natural Gas is implementing its comprehensive emergency response plan, and crews are prepared for the storm.

Virginia Natural Gas is providing the following guidelines associated with natural gas safety during weather emergencies:

### Appliance Safety Before and After the Storm

- Customers are advised to leave their natural gas service operational during a hurricane or severe storm. Most modern gas appliances have safety valves that shut off the flow of natural gas automatically with a loss of gas pressure or flooding of the appliances.
- Leaving the appliance operational could prevent further damage of water getting into the customer's fuel line or appliance control valves.
- Electronic ignition appliances will not come on when the power source has been impacted.
- Lowering the temperature on the central heat at the thermostat and turning the water heater to its lowest hot water setting would be the best option.
- If you are uncomfortable leaving your appliances operational, contact a trained professional (certified plumber or HVAC rep) to shut off your appliances at the cutoff valves. When it is safe to do so, have them return to turn the valves back on, leak test the line and turn on and test the appliance for safe operation.
- If flooding occurs at a residence or business and the gas appliances are under water, customers are advised not to operate their appliances until a safety inspection is conducted by a certified plumber or HVAC representative.

### Detecting Gas Leaks

- If customers smell the distinctive rotten-egg odor associated with natural gas, they should leave the area immediately and move a safe distance away from the potential leak, while avoiding any action that may cause sparks.

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- Customers should never try to identify the source of a leak or stop the leak themselves.
- Avoid using any sources of ignition, such as cell phones, cigarettes, matches, flashlights, electronic devices, motorized vehicles, light switches or landlines, as natural gas can ignite from a spark, possibly causing a fire or explosion.
- Customers should call the Virginia Natural Gas 24-hour emergency response line at 1-877-572-3342 or 911 once they are in a safe place out of the area of the suspected leak. They should also stay away until Virginia Natural Gas or emergency personnel indicates it is safe to return.

### **Damage Prevention**

- Strong winds and saturated ground could cause trees to become uprooted. Before removing downed trees, customers should contact VA811 by calling 811 to have the location of underground utility lines marked because downed trees could become tangled with the natural gas lines.
- If a natural gas meter is damaged or natural gas line is exposed, customers should immediately leave the area and call the Virginia Natural Gas 24-hour emergency response line at 1-877-572-3342 or 911 from a safe location.

### **Meter Safety**

- Customers are encouraged to know where to locate their natural gas meter.
- Following a weather emergency, customers should ensure the natural gas meter is visible, and the area surrounding the meter is free of trash and debris. Mechanical equipment used after the storm to clean up a location may damage the meter if it is hidden.
- If a natural gas meter is damaged or an underground gas line is exposed, customers should immediately leave the area, and call the Virginia Natural Gas 24-hour emergency response line at 1-877-572-3342 or 911 from a safe location.

### **Natural Gas Generators**

- During a power outage, natural gas generators provide continuous fuel supply from an existing natural gas line. While these units are available in a range of sizes to meet various energy needs, customers are encouraged to contact Virginia Natural Gas prior to purchase and installation to determine whether their service line and meter meets load requirements for the generator's safe and efficient operation.

### **Carbon Monoxide Safety**

- To ensure the safe, proper operation of natural gas appliances, such as a furnace and water heater, and to prevent the potentially hazardous buildup of carbon monoxide within your home or business, ensure that outdoor vent openings and air intakes are not obstructed.
- If customers smell natural gas or suspect carbon monoxide is present in their home or business, they should immediately leave the area and call the Virginia Natural Gas 24-hour emergency response line at 1-877-572-3342 or 911 from a safe location.
- Residents are encouraged to seek medical attention immediately if anyone in their home or business experiences possible symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, which include headache, dizziness, fatigue, nausea and vomiting.

For information about natural gas safety, visit [virginianaturalgas.com/safety](http://virginianaturalgas.com/safety).

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**About Virginia Natural Gas**

Virginia Natural Gas is one of four natural gas distribution companies of Southern Company Gas, a wholly owned subsidiary of Southern Company (NYSE: SO). Virginia Natural Gas provides natural gas service to nearly 300,000 customers in southeast Virginia. Virginia Natural Gas has been recognized as one of the safest, most reliable and customer-focused natural gas service providers and is consistently ranked in the top quartile for customer satisfaction by J.D. Power and Associates. In 2017, Virginia Natural Gas earned the Most Trusted Brand recognition from Market Strategies International's Cogent Report™ study and for the second consecutive year was named Local Distribution Company of the Year by the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy and the Virginia Oil and Gas Association. For more information, visit [virginiannaturalgas.com](http://virginiannaturalgas.com) and connect with the company on Facebook and Twitter.

**About Southern Company Gas**

Southern Company Gas is a wholly owned subsidiary of Atlanta-based Southern Company (NYSE:SO), America's premier energy company. Southern Company Gas serves approximately 4.2 million natural gas utility customers through its regulated distribution companies in four states with 774,000 retail customers through its companies that market natural gas. Other nonutility businesses include investments in interstate pipelines, asset management for natural gas wholesale customers and ownership and operation of natural gas storage facilities. For more information, visit Southern Company Gas at [southerncompanygas.com](http://southerncompanygas.com).

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