

Gas Standards and Safety

Guidance Note

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DIGGING NEAR GAS PIPES? PLAY IT SAFE!

DIAL BEFORE YOU DIG

The consequences of a gas pipeline rupture can be devastating – explosions and fire that result in personal injury, property damage or even death. When you damage a buried gas pipeline, you expose people and property to unacceptable risk and financial loss.

Make sure you have accurate information about the location of buried gas pipelines before you do any work.

Contact Dial Before You Dig (DBYD) before you begin any form of excavation work. DBYD is a free referral service for information on underground pipes (including gas) and cables.

DBYD automatically passes on the details of any works registered within the system to natural gas asset owners, who will assess your proposed work area and provide you with information about the location of gas assets and any special work requirements or restrictions.

You must read and comply with any requirements made for both your safety and the safety of the asset that has been provided by the gas asset owner in response to your DBYD enquiry.

You can usually expect a response within two working days, but you should allow more time to be on the safe side.

To lodge an enquiry with Dial Before You Dig:

- Phone 1100
- Fax 1300 652 077
- Go on online www.1100.com.au



PIPELINES

There are two types of buried gas pipelines within Tasmania. These are:

- Transmission gas pipelines – high pressure (found trans-state)
- Distribution gas pipelines – medium pressure (found in towns and cities).

Transmission Gas Pipelines

If you breach the *Gas Pipelines Act 2000* – even if the pipeline is undamaged – you can face penalties of up to \$26,000. Breaches include:

- Unauthorised excavation, boring and earth work of any type within the easement granted for the pipeline (excluding hand excavation or agricultural activities such as ploughing or cultivation to a depth not exceeding 300 millimetres).
- Not complying with reasonable requirements made by the pipeline operator for the protection of the pipeline or the safety of people or property.
- Interfering with the pipeline's operating and maintenance activities, with activities such as building fences, planting trees, installing dams, roads and services like water lines, communications cables and underground power without consulting with the transmission pipeline operator.

Distribution Gas Pipelines

If you breach the *Gas Act 2000* – even if the pipeline is undamaged – you can face penalties of up to \$13,000. Breaches include:

- Unauthorised excavation, boring and earth work of any type within the proximity of distribution pipelines
- Damage or interference with the distribution pipeline without proper authority.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- It is essential that you report any accidental damage to gas pipelines immediately. This applies even in cases where only the pipeline coating or surface appears to be scratched. Superficial damage can weaken the pipeline and has the potential of future failure.
- If you need to do urgent excavation work near gas pipelines (maybe an emergency or incident response) then you should contact the asset operator before you begin.
- Gas pipelines are often installed using trenchless methods such as Horizontal Directional Drilling. Take extra care excavating near pipes installed this way as the normal methods for locating pipes may not be accurate. Usual signs that pipes have been laid such as pavement repair, backfill material and warning tape will not be visible. It's essential that you understand any drill logs and that you also 'prove' the location of gas pipes by hand excavation (potholing).

- If you notice any signs of a leak near a gas pipeline, immediately:
 - remove and/or switch off all ignition sources except diesel fuelled plant and equipment, extinguish cigarettes and naked flames, turn off petrol and electrical motors, remove mobile phones and battery operated equipment
 - evacuate the immediate area by foot
 - call Emergency Services (Fire) on 000
 - call the asset operator emergency phone number.
- Signs of a gas leak can include:
 - an unusual smell
 - a blowing or hissing sound, or dust blowing from hole in ground
 - continuous bubbling in wet or flooded areas.
 - a spot of dead or discoloured vegetation in an otherwise green area
 - flames.
- Report any unauthorised or suspicious activity on or near a gas pipeline to the pipeline operator.

PLAY IT SAFE

Severe penalties can and will be imposed on individuals or companies who endanger the safe operation of a gas pipeline. Risking the lives or property of others by interfering with or damaging a pipeline or facility is breaking the law.

In the interest of everyone's safety, look out for gas pipeline markers and contact the Dial Before You Dig service before starting any excavation, drilling, boring or blasting activities.

Pipeline marker posts or curb markers serve to indicate that there is a buried gas pipeline nearby. Markers are only indicative and do not provide precise location or depth of the pipeline.

To ensure that you obtain a precise pipeline location, contact either Dial Before You Dig service for planned work, or the gas pipeline operator for urgent locations advice.

Contacts for urgent or emergency situations:

Emergency Services – 000

Tas Gas Networks (TGN) - Contact the gas emergency line immediately on 1802 111. If you can't reach this number when using your mobile phone, call 02 9397 9013 or 131 909

Tasmanian Gas Pipeline (TGP) – Emergency contact 1800 195 666, Zinfra 03 6345 2300

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information contact the Gas Standards and Safety team at Building Standards and Occupational Licensing

Phone: (in Tasmania) 1300 366 322 | Phone: (outside Tasmania) (03) 6166 4600

Fax: (03) 6173 0205

Email: wstinfo@justice.tas.gov.au

Address: PO Box 56, Rosny Park TAS 7018

This information is for guidance only and is not to be taken as an expression of the law. It should be read in conjunction with the *Gas Act 2000* and *Gas Pipelines Act 2000* and prescribed regulations

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