# **MUNICIPAL NEWSLETTER | SPRING 2023**



# SPRING/SUMMER ASSISTANCE

Are you or someone you know struggling with current or past natural gas bills? Columbia Gas has assistance programs available for income-eligible customers. Visit **ColumbiaGasOhio.com/Assistance** to learn about the programs that are currently available.

# **PAYMENT PLANS**

Even if you aren't eligible for energy assistance programs, you may be eligible for one of our flexible payment plans. Our payment plans are designed to give you choices and help ease any financial stress you may be experiencing. Visit **ColumbiaGasOhio.com/PaymentPlans** to learn about the options that are currently available.

# **MONITOR YOUR USAGE**

Sign in to your account to view and compare previous usage, weather and bills. Multiple types of historical data on your account are available to review and compare. Don't have an online account? Register today at **ColumbiaGasOhio.com**.

# **ENERGY SAVING TIPS**

Find valuable information about ways to save on your energy usage, easy conservation tips and much more. Visit **ColumbiaGasOhio.com/Save**.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES TO MORE EFFECTIVELY MANAGE YOUR ENERGY BILL CAN BE FOUND AT COLUMBIAGASOHIO.COM/TAKECONTROL.

# **CHARITABLE GIVING**

Columbia Gas contributes time, money and resources each year to local 501(c)(3) programs and organizations. Key focus areas include Hardship Assistance, Workforce Development, Energy Education, Environmental Justice and DE&I.

Learn more at ColumbiaGasOhio.com/ColumbiaCares.



# **WORK ZONE SAFETY**

As weather continues to improve, motorists can expect to see a larger number of road construction projects. Columbia Gas reminds all motorists to follow good safety practices in work zones.

- **SLOW DOWN:** Speeding is one of the major causes of work zone crashes.
- EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED: Normal speed limits may be reduced; traffic lanes may change; and people may be working on or near the road.
- **KEEP YOUR DISTANCE**: Keep a safe distance between you and the car ahead of you, and don't tailgate.
- PAY ATTENTION TO SIGNS: Observe posted signs until you see the one that says you've left the zone.
- OBEY ROAD CREW FLAGGERS: A flagger has the same authority as a regulatory sign, so you can be cited for disobeying his or her directions.
- STAY ALERT AND MINIMIZE DISTRACTIONS: Dedicate your full attention to the roadway and avoid changing radio stations or using cell phones while driving.



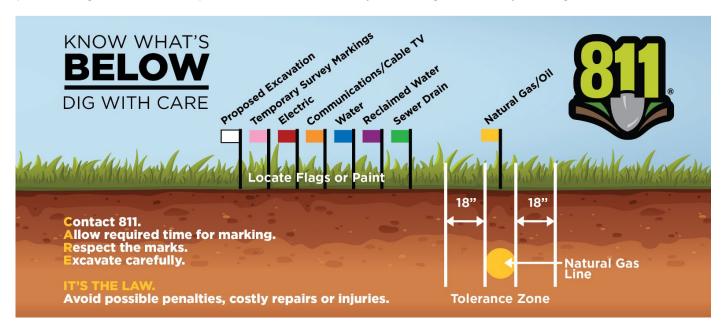
ColumbiaGasOhio.com





By law, anyone planning to excavate is required to contact Ohio 811 at least two business days before work begins. Whether you're building a major development or planning an excavation as part of a home landscaping project, like building a fence, avoid property damage and personal injury by contacting 811 before you start to dig.

Ohio 811 will notify all member utilities to mark the approximate location of underground utility lines, including natural gas pipelines that might be in the construction area, at no cost to property owners. Once the utility lines are marked it is important to dig with care and respect the marks while carefully excavating around utility markings.



# RESPECTING THE MARKS

Once you've contacted 811 and had the approximate location of underground utility lines marked, state law requires that you "respect the marks" by hand digging or using other non-mechanical means within the tolerance zone. In Ohio, the tolerance zone is defined as the width of the utility line plus 18 inches on each side. Methods of excavation within a tolerance zone include, but are not limited to, hand digging, potholing and vacuum excavation.





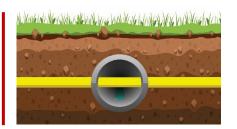


# MUNICIPAL NEWSLETTER | SPRING 2023 SEWER LINE SAFETY

Are new utility lines being installed in your district? Many utilities use proven trenchless excavation construction methods to install underground lines. During this process, a cross bore could be created.

Cross bores occur when natural gas lines or other utility lines are inadvertently installed through sewer lines. While rare, cross bores can go undetected for months or years. Typically, they cause sewer backups of wastewater in your home or yard and can pose an unknown risk.

For proper cross-bore procedures and more information on sewer line safety, visit ColumbiaGasOhio.com/Safety/Natural-Gas-Safety/Sewer-Line-Safety.



### **ENCROACHMENTS**

If Columbia Gas has an easement on your property, you should be aware of the guidelines for encroachment and construction near these easements. Learn more at **ColumbiaGasOhio.com/Encroachment**. Columbia Gas has an online form you can complete for more information about the easement on your property.

### **HOW TO IDENTIFY UNDERGROUND NATURAL GAS PIPELINES**

Natural gas pipelines are sometimes identified by markers placed at intervals along pipeline rights-of-way. Markers display 24-hour emergency telephone numbers and may provide other identifying information. They generally indicate the presence of a pipeline, at locations such as where a pipeline easement intersects a street, railroad, or river, or in other congested areas. It's a federal crime to willfully deface, damage, remove or destroy any pipeline sign or right-of-way marker. Always contact Ohio811 at 811 or visit Ohio811.org to have underground utility lines marked.

# WHAT IS THAT SMELL?

Some say it smells like rotten eggs or sulfur. It is actually mercaptan, an odorant added to natural gas as a safety precaution. Recognizing this smell can alert you to a natural gas leak. Gas leaks can also be detected by sight and sound. Be aware of signs such as blowing dirt, bubbling water or dead vegetation and a hissing or roaring sound. To learn more about leak detection and natural gas safety, visit **ColumbiaGasOhio.com/StaySafe**.



1. STOP WHAT YOU ARE DOING



2. LEAVE
THE AREA
IMMEDIATELY (IF
INSIDE, GET OUT)



3. CALL 911 & COLUMBIA GAS FROM A SAFE LOCATION



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