

UTILITIES

GAS

If there is a smell of gas or a hissing sound, the gas supply in the house or building must be turned off. Turn the valve on the meter to the left or right ¼ turn.

***Warning-** do not turn off gas unless escaping gas is suspected. **Only qualified personnel can re-activate the gas supply**, and it could take days or weeks for a qualified person to arrive after a disaster. Disasters can occur during cold weather when heat is needed.

Follow these safety procedures if you suspect a gas leak:

- Do not use matches.
- Extinguish cigarettes and all open flames.
- Do not operate electrical switches; do not turn them on or off
- Leave a door or window open. Since natural gas is lighter than air, it rises. It will dissipate through open windows and doors once the supply is shut off
- Exit the home immediately
- Turn off the gas at the valve.
- If possible, notify the gas utility of the leak.

HOT WATER TANK

Hot water heaters can be secured using three straps.

*Note: there are no approved BC standards or guidelines for strapping hot water tanks. This program shall not be liable for damage or loss arising out of or in any way related to this information or use of the same.

WATER

In the event of damage to the water mains or contamination of the water supply there are two places to shut off water: the inside water shut-off valve and the outside street shut-off valve.

The inside water shut-off valve is usually in the basement, in the garage or on the main floor. To turn off the inside valve, turn it to the **right**

The outside water shut-off valve may be in the driveway, lawn or walkway at the front of the building. It is usually at the property line. A special water key is required to turn off the outside shut-off. Turn the valve ¼ turn to the **right** to shut it off. The neighbourhood team should know the location of all street shut-off valves and ensure they are not corroded and seized up.

Check with your municipal engineering or public works department for information on the special water key.

ELECTRICITY

If power is disrupted during a disaster, turning off the power will protect against power surges that may damage the electrical system. Shutting off the power will also lessen the possibility of fire damage if no one is home when the power is restored.

Turn off the power by shutting off the main breaker. Individual circuit breakers can also be turned off. When power is restored, each circuit can be turned back on as needed.

***Warning: Do not operate switches until assured there is no gas leak.**

GENERATORS

Portable generators are very useful. Their power can provide light, prevent food spoilage and provide information by making it possible to operate communications equipment.

To operate a generator safely and to avoid creating a hazard for utility employees or the public, follow this simple plan:

1. Read & follow the manufacturer's operating instructions for the particular generator. Ensure there is a supply of fuel at hand.
2. Contact B.C. Hydro for information on how to prepare for unavoidable interruptions in electrical service.
3. Connect lights and appliances directly to the generator. Do not connect the generator to an existing electrical system.

***WARNING** Portable generators are generally safe, but they should not be connected to a house electrical system. When the generator is connected to an existing electrical system, the electrical energy it produces may flow backward through the serving utility's system. When electrical energy flows backward through a utility system transformer, the relatively low voltage produced by home generators is transformed into high voltage, which can endanger neighbours or utility employees involved in repair or maintenance of the system.

PROPANE

If there is a propane leak, it may have an odour similar to the smell of rotten eggs consistent with that of a natural gas leak. At this point, do the following:

- Stop the leak. If the escaping propane is not on fire, close any valve available that can stop the flow of gas. Small lines such as copper tubing can be flattened to stop the flow. Propane can be turned off at the propane tank using the hand wheel.
- Prevent accidental ignition. Although propane has a narrow range of combustion, there have been a number of propane fires ignited by electrical switches, ignition sparks, doorbells, telephone dials and static electricity.
- Stop the gas from entering into the lower portions of buildings. Since propane is heavier than air, it can pool in low areas, such as a basement.
- Clear people out of the area. If possible call 911 and also advise B.C. Hydro and Gas officials of the leak.
- If there is a white fog or frost on the propane lines, stay away. They indicate a liquid propane leak. Liquid propane is an effective refrigerant and can cause severe frost burns to the body. Such frost burns should be treated like fire burns.