



Stay safe.  
Call 811.

**Katie S.**  
Lead AMR  
Meter Reader  
8 years of service

# ENERGY CONNECTIONS

MAR 2019

## It's time for pipeline inspections

## Excess Gas Flow Valve Notice

If a gas service is installed at your home, you have the option to purchase an Excess Flow Valve (EFV) to be installed by NorthWestern Energy. An EFV is intended to stop the flow of gas if the service line is severed. The EFV is placed on the service line where it leaves the gas main.

An EFV will stop the flow of gas only if the service line is severely damaged. It is important to note that an EFV will not protect you from a leak or broken line inside your home, or a small leak on the service line in your yard. An example of when the valve provides protection is in the event the gas service is damaged from digging or extreme ground movement.

As required by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), we are notifying you that an EFV that meets the minimum prescribed DOT performance standards, is available for installation on your natural gas service line.

The cost of installing the EFV will need to be evaluated by an engineer. If you are interested, please contact your local NorthWestern Energy office to set up an appointment. Payment is required prior to installation of the EFV.



Each year, around the middle of April, NorthWestern Energy undertakes a huge project – inspecting 2,100 miles of its gas pipeline system.

NorthWestern employees and contractors perform physical checks of gas pipelines and related equipment every spring

“Mainly, we want to make sure the system is safe,” said Kevin Cicon, gas patrolman operator based in Augusta, Mont.

The crews look for leaks, washouts and anything that could potentially cause problems. Along the way, they perform minor maintenance and note needed repairs.

On occasion, inspectors may need to access your property to complete the survey. They drive clearly marked vehicles, wear bright yellow vests and clothing that identifies them as NorthWestern Energy employees or contractors, and carry appropriate identification.

“We try to be visible out there,” said Brian Neckstad, craftsman 1st class mechanic.

NorthWestern does not notify individual customers about inspection crews accessing their property, but the company does run ads in local newspapers and radio stations around the time they’ll be a specific area.

One of the most common issues they encounter is encroachment on the pipeline right-of-way – meaning someone has built a fence or shed too close to the gas line. This is one reason why it’s important to always call 811 before you dig.

Inspections are done about half on foot and half on ATV. In towns, crews use hand-held flame ionization tools to detect leaks. In more rural areas, they ride ATVs along pipelines to look for problems.

NorthWestern’s gas pipeline system runs throughout the western half of Montana, the east side of South Dakota and into a small portion of Nebraska. That means the buried pipes are in prairies, mountains and everything in between.

“We get to see a lot of country most people don’t get to see,” Kevin said.

## Pipeline safety information



### Pipeline markers

Markers show the approximate location of pipelines and identify the companies that operate them. The pipeline may not follow in a straight course between markers. Pipeline operators are required to place markers, sometimes called right-of-way markers, at all public road and railroad crossings. These markers indicate the pipeline content, the name of the pipeline operator and the operator’s emergency phone number. Please note that even if the pipeline is marked, you must contact 811 for utility line locates before digging.

### Pipeline monitoring

As a pipeline operator, we monitor the status of our pipelines seven days a week,

24 hours a day to ensure they are safe and secure. We use computers, alarms, meters and satellite technology to control and check our pipelines. The monitoring systems detect changes in pressure and flow, and they activate warnings and safeguards if a leak is detected. Some pipelines even contain automatic shut-off valves that isolate leaks.

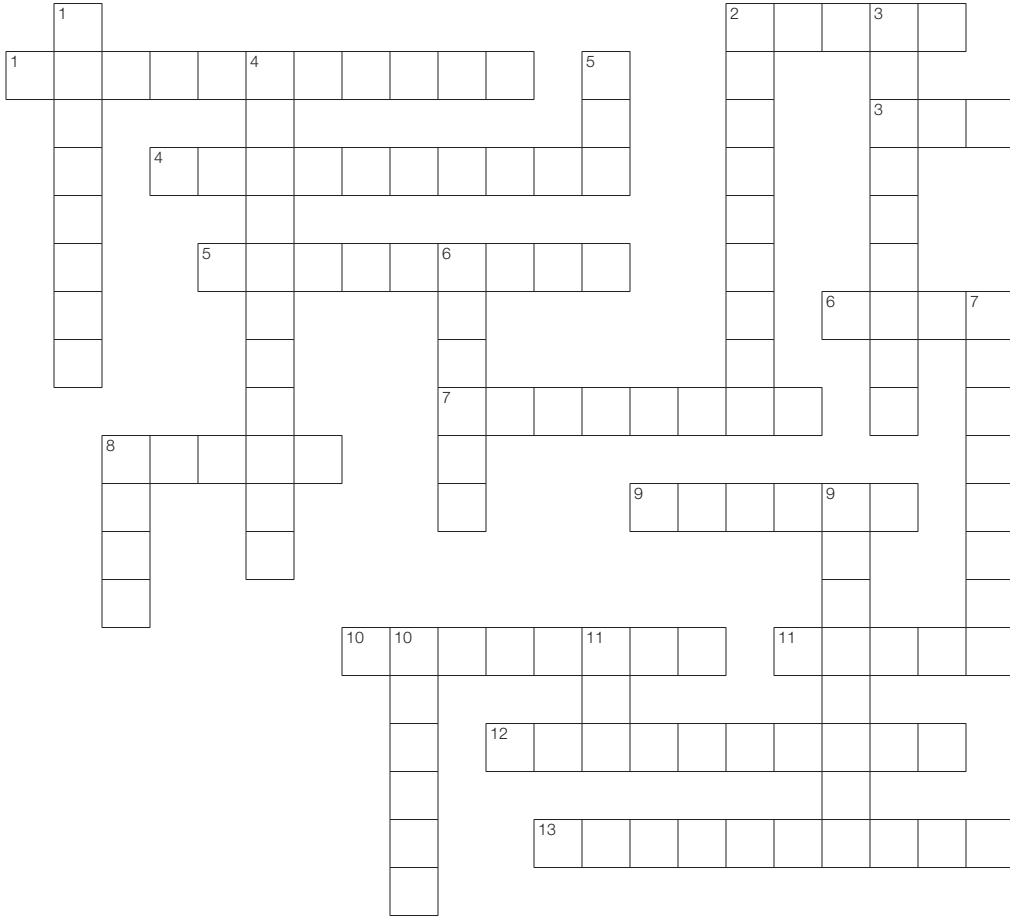
### Pipeline reliability

While pipelines have a good safety record relative to the tremendous volumes of products they carry, pipeline incidents can and sometimes do occur. NorthWestern Energy urges everyone to become aware of pipelines in their communities and to understand how to prevent, recognize and respond to pipeline emergencies.

### HCAs and IMP

Federal pipeline safety regulations use the concept of High Consequence Areas (HCAs) to identify specific locations and areas where an accidental release of natural gas could have the most significant adverse consequences. Once an HCA has been identified, operators devote additional focus to ensure the integrity of pipelines in that area. We have in place an Integrity Management Program that defines the steps and timelines for identifying HCAs, assessing the integrity of the pipelines and taking aggressive steps to mitigate the risks to people and property near HCAs.

# 811 Crossword Puzzle



## ACROSS

- Natural gas is non-toxic (non-poisonous), but can cause death by \_\_\_\_ if the gas displaces the air in a confined space and can be explosive in the right conditions.
- You can call, \_\_\_\_ or tap to reach 881 services.
- Color of ELM utility markings (colored flags, stakes or paint) for electric power lines, cables, conduit and lighting cables.
- Pipeline operators, including NorthWestern Energy, are vigilant about 7-day-a-week, 24-hour-a-day pipeline \_\_\_\_ with computers, alarms, meters and satellite technology.
- The rotten egg smell we add to odorless natural gas that is harmless and non-toxic but warns people of possible dangers is an odorant called.
- Color of ELM utility markings (colored flags, stakes or paint) for potable water.
- Markers that show approximate location of pipelines and identify the companies that operate them are called \_\_\_\_ safety markers.
- Mark the area where you are digging with flags or \_\_\_\_.
- Color of ELM utility markings (colored flags, stakes or paint) for natural gas lines.
- Customers should have the pipes periodically inspected for leaks, and \_\_\_\_ pipes should also be inspected for corrosion by qualified professionals, such as your local plumber.

- Color of ELM utility markings (colored flags, stakes or paint) for sewer and drain lines.
- The maintenance of buried gas piping \_\_\_\_ of the gas meter to gas-fired. Appliances or other various structures on the property is the responsibility of the home/property owner or current occupant.
- Check the area before \_\_\_\_ with your project.

## DOWN

- You should call 811 two full \_\_\_\_ days in advance of any digging project.
- Piping that is not maintained may be subject to \_\_\_\_ or leaking.
- Dig \_\_\_\_ around the marks and stay at least 18-24 inches from all side of the markings.
- An area where a pipeline leak or release is identified by officials as an HCA, a High \_\_\_\_ area.
- Do not \_\_\_\_ until the utilities are marked.
- Color of ELM utility markings (colored flags, stakes or paint) for reclaimed water, irrigation or slurry lines.
- Diggers must hand dig \_\_\_\_ inches around a marking.
- ELM (The contractor spraying marks when you call) colored flags, stakes or paint for temporary survey markings.
- If you are using heavy equipment or planting tall trees, be sure to take time to observe \_\_\_\_ power and utility lines.
- An EFV, or \_\_\_\_ Flow Valve, stops the flow of gas if a pipeline is severed.
- Call before you dig; it's the \_\_\_\_.

Know what's below by the different colored flags, stakes or paint.



## Contact us...

### MONTANA

Customer Contact Center (888) 467-2669  
7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F  
Emergency 24/7 Service  
Call Before You Dig 811  
Energy Efficiency (800) 823-5995

### NEBRASKA

Customer Contact Center (800) 245-6977  
7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F  
Emergency 24/7 Service  
Call Before You Dig 811

### SOUTH DAKOTA

Customer Contact Center (800) 245-6977  
7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F  
Emergency 24/7 Service  
Call Before You Dig 811

### PAYMENT

Automated Phone  
Payment Option: (800) 218-4959  
(via checking, savings, or money market account)  
SpeedPay Automated  
Phone Payment Option: (877) 361-4927  
(via credit card account)

### CONNECT WITH US



We are required to translate important customer information for populations in our service area that meet a certain threshold. We have two languages that currently meet that threshold: Spanish and Karenic.

Nos preocupamos por su seguridad. Este anexo a su factura incluye mensajes importantes sobre seguridad que usted necesita saber con respecto al servicio público que le proporciona NorthWestern Energy. Comuníquese con nosotros si desea recibir la información de seguridad en español, llamando al teléfono 888-467-2669 (en Montana) 800-245-6977 (en South Dakota o Nebraska) y pregunte por las opciones de idiomas para los anexos de sus facturas.

ပတၢ်ယိၣ်န့ၣ်တၢ်လၢ နတၢ်ပူၤဖျးအတီၢ်န့ၣ်လီၤ. လံာ်တၢ်ယုၤက့ၢ်စရိၣ်ဘူၤ(လၢ) လၢ တၢ်ထၢန့ၣ်လီၤအိၣ်ဆၢ ပၣ်ယုၤတၢ်ဘၣ်တၢ်ဘၣ်တၢ်ဘၣ်တၢ်ဘၣ်အရီၣ် တဖၣ်လၢ နၢၤတြးသ့ၣ်ညါအိၣ်လၢ အဘၣ်ယး? NorthWestern Energy ထံၣ်မ့ၣ်အူတၢ်မၤန့ၣ်လီၤ. ဆဲးကျၢပုၤဖဲ နမ့ၢ်လိၣ်ဘၣ် တၢ်ဂံၢ်တၢ်ဂၢၢ်တဖၣ် လၢ ပုၤကတၢၢ်ကျိၣ် (Karenic) . ဒိဖျိ တၢ်ဂံၢ်လိၣ်တံၢ် 888-467-2669 (လၢမိၣ်ထီၣ်န့ၣ် (Montana) အပူၤ)800-245-6977 (လၢက လံာ်စး) ၆၆၆ထံၣ် (South Dakota) မ့တဖၣ် န့ၣ်တြးစ့ၣ် (Nebraska) ဝဲယုၤန့ၣ်လၢ တၢ်ကထၢန့ၣ်လီၤ က့ၢ်စရိၣ်တၢ်ယုၤကတၢၢ်အတီၢ်န့ၣ်တက့ၢ်.



Know what's below.  
Tap, Click, or Call  
811 Before you dig.

