

Fact Sheet on Gas Leaks in Wellesley

Wellesley Natural Resources Commission

Natural gas is distributed to our homes and other buildings through pipes under the street. Some of these pipes are more than 100 years old and have developed leaks. There are about 16,000 known gas leaks in Massachusetts — at least 200 are in Wellesley.

Why do we care about gas leaks?

- **Gas leaks contribute to global warming.**
 - Natural gas consists primarily of methane, known to be one of the most destructive chemicals implicated in global warming.
 - Methane makes up about 10% of the greenhouse gas emissions in our state.
 - Methane leaks undermine our efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through efficiency and conservation.
- **Gas leaks are dangerous.** Under certain conditions, gas leaks can result in explosions, although gas companies work hard to identify and urgently repair any potentially explosive leak.
- **Gas leaks are harmful to human health.** We breathe in the methane and chemical components of the leaking gas, resulting in asthma and other respiratory illnesses.
- **Gas leaks cost us money.** As ratepayers, we are all paying for lost gas every month on our bills.
- **Gas leaks kill our trees and other plants.** Methane in the soil takes the place of oxygen that trees and plants need, essentially suffocating them.

In March 2017, the NRC hosted a gas leaks summit and conducted an independent gas leaks survey to better identify the locations of the town's gas leaks. Find out where gas leaks are located in Wellesley by visiting:

<http://www.wellesleyma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9165>

What can we do about gas leaks?

State law requires that gas companies fix leaks that are potentially explosive (M.G.Lch164§144). Any gas leak on or within 50 feet of a school zone is also required by law to be prioritized for repair. Other leaks must be investigated but the gas company is not required to repair them immediately. The Department of Public Utilities is developing new regulations for the repair of leaks that are considered environmentally significant.

Meanwhile, as citizens, we can raise awareness about the gas leaks problem and make sure that the gas companies and our legislators know that we care about this issue and want to see it addressed.

- Join the **Natural Resource Commission** email list to stay informed: nrc@wellesleyma.gov
- Support efforts to transition our energy supply away from natural gas to clean and renewable sources.
- Consider switching your home to electric heat with the installation of an electric heat pump.
- When purchasing a new stove or clothes dryer, consider an electric appliance rather than one powered by gas.

If you smell gas in Wellesley, call National Grid at 800-233-5325.

Wellesley Natural Resources Commission
Visit us at wellesleyma.gov/NRC
Facebook: [@WellesleyNaturalResourcesCommission](https://www.facebook.com/WellesleyNaturalResourcesCommission)