



# Customer Booklet

This booklet is provided to new customers in accordance with the rules of the Michigan Public Service Commission.



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# Introduction

Welcome to SEMCO ENERGY Gas Company!

SEMCO ENERGY Gas Company (SEMCO) serves approximately 330,000 customers by providing safe, dependable, and economical natural gas to homes in 25 Michigan counties.

SEMCO's rates are regulated by the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC).

This booklet contains information pertinent to SEMCO customers, and includes some of the following topics:

- Billing and payment standards
- Deposit and guarantee requirements
- Gas shut off and restoration processes
- Service, inquiry, and complaint procedures
- Customer rights and responsibilities
- Natural gas safety

Please retain this booklet for future reference, or visit [www.semcoenergygas.com](http://www.semcoenergygas.com). Contact SEMCO Customer Service by phone, 1-800-624-2019, with any questions.

## Some Things to Know

Copies of regulations and rates, rules on Consumer Standards and Billing Practices, and a schedule of rates are available upon request, or by visiting [www.semcoenergygas.com](http://www.semcoenergygas.com).

# Smell Gas or Suspect a Gas Leak?

1. Go to a safe location.
2. Call 1-888-GAS-1-GAS (1-888-427-1427) to report the gas leak or emergency.

## Estimation

Extreme conditions such as severe weather, emergencies, or no access may prevent SEMCO from being able to obtain an actual meter reading. In this case, the bill may be estimated. Estimated bills are based on previous year's gas usage at the premise and may be adjusted for weather variances. Any slight variation between the actual gas usage and the estimated reading is corrected if, and when, an actual meter reading is obtained. If a meter read is estimated, it will be clearly indicated on the bill.

If the bill is estimated for more than two consecutive months, additional time may be available to pay the bill once an actual read is obtained. For more information about payment plans or to report an actual meter read please contact Customer Service at 1-800-624-2019.

Most meters are read using Automated Meter Reading (AMR) equipment. AMR transmits usage data from the meter to a device inside a SEMCO vehicle that drives by to obtain the read. In rare cases, it may not be possible to obtain a read with this system. If this occurs, a SEMCO employee will visit the home to read the meter, or the reading will be estimated.

# SEMCO Monthly Bill



Natural Gas works for Michigan

## Account Information

Account Number 6  
Name 7  
Service Address 8  
Account Type 9

## Usage History



## Usage Detail

Meter Number:	Usage Period:	Previous Read:	Current Read:	Meter Factor:	Therm Factor:	Usage:
12	13	14	15	16	17	18

## Important Messages

The MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION (MPSC) regulates SEMCO ENERGY Gas Company.

IF GAS SERVICE HAS BEEN SHUT OFF, ANY ATTEMPT TO RESTORE SERVICE BY ANYONE OTHER THAN AN AUTHORIZED SEMCO EMPLOYEE IS ILLEGAL AND DANGEROUS.

Any inquiry or complaint about the bill must be made before the due date. Call Customer Service at 1-800-624-2019 or mail inquiries and complaints directly to SEMCO ENERGY Gas Company at PO Box 5004, Fort Huron, MI 48051-5004.

To report a Gas Leak or Emergency, call 1-888-GAS-1-GAS (888-427-1427).

SEMCO ENERGY Gas Company will pay interest at a rate as ordered by the MPSC on all deposits. Interest will be credited semi-annually on the customer's gas bill. Upon termination of service or satisfactory payment by the customer for a period of 12 successive months, the deposit with the remaining interest will be applied to the customer's current or final bill.

**Rate Class**  
1-Residential Customers 3-GS2 6601-28500 Therms  
2-GS1 0-6600 Therms 4-GS3 28501 Therms and above

A complete set of rules, regulations, and rate schedules for gas service are available upon request and can be reviewed with company assistance.



## Account Summary

Balance Forward	1
Current Charges - Due	2
Total Amount Due by MM/DD/YY	4

If Paid After MM/DD/YY 5

## Account Messages

Check here for important information about your account.

This area will contain messaging that is driven by your specific monthly billing situation and can range from a past due warning message to a status update on your monthly budget plan.

## SEMCO ENERGY News

Check here for SEMCO messages, community news, and information regarding new products/services.

## Account Detail

Days Billed:

Previous Balance	
Payment - Thank you!	
Balance Forward	
<b>Current Charges</b>	
SEMCO Cost of Gas (0.2763000)	19
<b>Other Charges</b>	
Customer Charge	20
MRP Charge	21
IRIP Charge	22
Distribution Charge (0.173420)	23
Balancing Demand Charge (0.077700)	24
FID Charge (0.0041)	25
Sales Tax	26
Homeserve - Unregulated Charges	27
1-888-300-5039	
<b>Total Current Charges</b>	
Total Amount Due by MM/DD/YY	

Amount billed for Natural Gas 28

- Balance Forward/Past Due Amount:** The remaining, unpaid balance from the previous billing period.
- Due Date of Current Charges:** The date the current charges are due. Any past due balance is subject to the original due date.
- Current Charges:** The charges from the usage period of the current bill.

4. **Total Amount Due:** The total balance due, which may include any balance forward/past due amount, current charges, unregulated charges, or budget amount due.
5. **If Paid After:** The total amount due, including penalties, if paid after the due date.
6. **Account Number:** The unique number used to identify an account.
7. **Name:** Customer of record.
8. **Service Address:** The address where the service is provided.
9. **Account Type:** The rate class and description of the account. All rate classes are listed on the back of the bill.
10. **Units Used in Therms Last Year:** The volume of gas used in therms last year.
11. **Units Used in Therms:** The volume of gas used in therms.
12. **Meter Number:** Number assigned to the meter at the premise.
13. **Usage Period:** Date range of the current billing period.
14. **Previous Read:** Beginning meter read and type.
15. **Current Read:** Ending meter read and type.
16. **Meter Factor:** A factor used to calculate the volume of gas for residential, commercial, and industrial customers.
17. **Therm Factor:** A factor used to convert the volume of gas consumed from CCF to therms. One therm is equivalent to 100,000 British Thermal Units (BTU) and represents the thermal energy content of the gas.
18. **Usage:** Therms used in the usage period.

19. **SEMCO Cost of Gas/Supplier Energy Charge:** This is the cost of gas purchased from natural gas suppliers or the cost of natural gas supplied by an alternative gas supplier. SEMCO cost of gas is a direct pass through. SEMCO does not profit on the sale of gas.
20. **Customer Charge:** A fixed charge for costs associated to maintaining the meter, pressure regulator, and billing.
21. **MRP Charge:** The Main Replacement Program (MRP) charge is a fixed charge for costs associated with replacing natural gas pipelines each year.
22. **IRIP Charge:** The Infrastructure Reliability Improvement Program (IRIP) charge is a fixed charge for costs associated with improving the natural gas infrastructure each year.
23. **Distribution Charge:** This volumetric charge is a combination of charges for both maintaining the distribution system and to fund the State mandated Energy Waste Reduction program which helps to support customer energy efficiency projects throughout Michigan.
24. **Balancing Demand Charge:** This is the cost of balancing customer consumption with actual gas deliveries and the cost associated with pipeline capacity.
25. **FID Charge:** The Facility Improvement Demand Surcharge (FID) is used to fund pipeline upgrades and system improvements, like new pipeline interconnections, as approved by the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC). These upgrades are typically facilities constructed by a supplier to SEMCO and not owned by SEMCO but were constructed for the benefit of SEMCO customers. It's a separate cost added to your basic gas service, with specific rates set by the MPSC and updated periodically.
26. **Sales Tax:** Residential accounts are taxed at a rate of 4%, commercial accounts are taxed at a rate of 6%.
27. **Unregulated Charges:** Includes charges such as appliance coverage. Failure to pay for unregulated services may result in termination of the coverage, but not in the discontinuance of gas service. Partial payments are credited to any outstanding gas balance first.
28. **Amount Billed For Natural Gas:** The amount billed October 1 – September 30 of the previous year. from October 1 – September 30 of the previous year.



# Bill Calculation

The usage billed is based on the measurement of one-hundred cubic feet (CCF) recorded on the meter, or estimated if an actual reading is not available. To arrive at the therms used, calculate the difference between the ending read and beginning read (or CCF used) and multiply by the meter factor, if it is different than 1. Finally, multiply the CCF by the monthly therm factor. The result is the therms used.

To calculate each charge, multiply the therms used by the following rates:

- Distribution Charge
- Balancing Demand Charge
- SEMCO Cost of Gas or Supplier Energy Charge
- FID Charge

## Verifying Bill Accuracy

SEMCO makes every effort to ensure that bills are accurate, by including several validation steps in the billing procedures. There are also several techniques that a customer can use to review the bill:

- Compare the current bill to the bill from the same period last year to see if the amount of gas used and charges are comparable.  
Note: Always allow for any changes in the way gas is used (new appliances, additional or less household members, alternate heating sources, etc.), any changes in rates, and for differences in weather conditions.
- Compare the meter reading on the bill with an actual read from the meter.

Note: If the meter is read after the last read date on the bill, the reading should be higher than the last read used for billing.

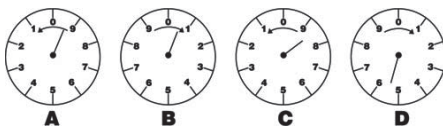
Contact Customer Service if any assistance is needed to verify the accuracy of the bill.

## Updating Customer Information

Please contact Customer Service at 1-800-624-2019 to update any personal information associated to your SEMCO account. Mailing address and phone number may also be updated through My Access Online by visiting [www.semcoenergygas.com](http://www.semcoenergygas.com).

## How to Read the Meter

The dials on the gas meter register the amount of gas used in units of one-hundred cubic feet (CCF). Reading a meter is similar to reading a clock. Follow the steps below:



1. Face the meter and read the dials from left to right. Read the number as indicated by the hands on the dials.
2. If a hand is between two numbers, take the smaller number; except when the hand is between 0 and 9 as in A above, in which case record the number 9.
3. In the illustration, dial A reads 9; dial B reads 0; dial C reads 8; and dial D reads 5. Some meters do not have dials as illustrated. Instead, the meter will look like an odometer on an automobile. In this case, the meter reading would be as displayed.

## Payment Options:

- **Online** - [www.semcoenergygas.com](http://www.semcoenergygas.com)
- **By Phone** – 1-800-624-2019
- **Authorized Payment Agents** – complete listing available at [www.semcoenergygas.com](http://www.semcoenergygas.com).
- **Mail** - SEMCO ENERGY Gas Company  
PO Box 740812  
Cincinnati OH 45274-0812
- **Direct Payment Plan** – while enrolled, the total amount due will be automatically deducted from a checking or savings account on the due date each month.

Customers have 21 days from the day the bill is mailed, until the bill is due. In the event that only a portion of the bill is paid, the payment will be applied to any outstanding gas balance first.

Mailed payments should be sent in the enclosed envelope along with the tear off portion of the bill and paid with a check or money order. Please note the check or money order with the SEMCO account number. Never send cash payments through the mail.

Please consider the due date and allow at least 7-10 business days for mailing time. For payments made at an Authorized Payment Agent, allow two (2) business days for the payment to be reflected on the account.

If payment is received after the due date, a late fee may be added to the account.

For more information, or to enroll in any payment programs, please contact Customer Service at 1-800-624-2019.

# The Budget Program

The budget program averages the gas usage at the premise over the last year to set a monthly payment amount.

Enrollment is FREE and open to residential customers during May, June, and July of each year. Commercial customers may enroll in May and June. To be eligible, the account must be current. To enroll, please contact Customer Service at 1-800-624-2019.

## Online Services

### eBill

While enrolled in eBill, email notifications are sent in place of paper billing statements to notify customers when the bill is ready to view.

- To enroll, register online at [www.semcoenergygas.com](http://www.semcoenergygas.com).

After registering, a confirmation email will be sent to the email address provided to verify the request.

Note: A paper bill will continue to be sent until the confirmation email is verified.

### My Access Online

SEMCO accounts can be managed through My Access Online.

To register, have the SEMCO account number, mailing address, zip code, and last four digits of the account holder's social security and/or driver's license number. Register at [www.semcoenergygas.com](http://www.semcoenergygas.com) and access these services:

- Make or schedule a payment.
- Review account and payment history.
- Turn on, off, or transfer the service.
- Update mailing address.
- Enroll in eBill and the Direct Payment Plan.

# Deposit and Guarantee Requirements

Deposits, or other guarantees, are not required from any customer on the basis of commercial credit standards, income, home ownership, residential location, creed, sex, age, national origin, race, color, marital status, familial status, disability, and other criteria not authorized by MPSC rules.

Deposits may be required from customers under the following situations:

- The customer failed to provide positive identification when starting service.
- The customer has an unpaid, undisputed bill incurred in the last six years.
- The customer interfered (tampered) with the gas service system in an unauthorized manner.
- The customer misrepresented their identity.
- The customer requested service at a residence in which they do not reside.
- The customer has had a payment returned for insufficient funds or “no account” within the last 12 months.
- The customer has had a denied debit or credit card payment in the last 12 months.
- The customer lived in a residence with a person who accrued a delinquent bill in the last three years, during the time the customer lived there, which remains unpaid and is not in dispute, and the person with the delinquent bill now resides with the customer.
- Gas service has been shut off for nonpayment.
- As allowed by Federal Bankruptcy Law.

Deposits may also be required from commercial customers in the following situations:

- A commercial customer has unsatisfactory payment history within the first 6 months of establishing service.
- A commercial customer has received two or more shut off notices within the last 12 months.

Deposits are not required in the following situations:

- Senior citizens (65 years of age or older).
- A customer that receives Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) assistance to start service (State Emergency Relief).
- A guarantor is secured (a customer in good credit standing).

## Deposit Amount

For residential customers, the amount of the deposit will not exceed twice the average monthly bill for the premise, or twice SEMCO's system average monthly bill for residential service, if consumption history for the premise is not available.

For a small nonresidential customer, the deposit amount will not exceed 15% of the customer's annual bill.

For a large nonresidential customer, the deposit amount will not exceed 25% of the customer's annual bill.

If unauthorized usage is detected, the amount of the deposit will not exceed four times the average monthly bill for the premise.

## Deposit Interest and Refunds

Deposits earn interest at a rate authorized and approved by the MPSC, and interest earned is credited to the customer's account semi-annually.

Deposits and interest will be refunded in the first period following 12 consecutive months in which all bills have been paid by the due date. Deposits required as a result of the unauthorized use of natural gas may be held for up to 36 consecutive months. Should the customer move, the deposit and interest will be applied to the final gas bill and any amount remaining will be refunded.

## Discontinuance of Gas Service

SEMCO is dedicated to providing safe, reliable gas service. If any of the following situations exist gas service may be stopped:

- The customer has an unpaid bill that accrued within the past six (6) years.
- The customer has failed to pay a deposit.
- The customer has engaged in unauthorized use of service.
- The customer has failed to comply with the terms and conditions of a settlement agreement or payment plan.
- The customer has refused to arrange access at reasonable times to SEMCO for the purpose of inspection, meter reading, maintenance, replacement of equipment, or for removal of a meter.
- The customer misrepresented his or her identity for the purpose of obtaining service or put service in another person's name without permission of the person.
- The customer is deceased and the account is not transferred into the name of a responsible person.
- The customer violated any rules or regulations approved by the MPSC, which adversely affect the safety of customers, other persons, or the integrity of SEMCO's gas delivery system.

- Service may be discontinued if a person living in the customer's residence is both of the following:
  - Delinquent on an account for service with SEMCO within the past three (3) years that remains unpaid and is not in dispute; and, the customer lived in the person's home when all or part of the debt was incurred. SEMCO may transfer a prorated amount of the debt to the customer's account, based on the length of time that the customer resided at the person's residence. This provision does not apply if the customer was a minor while living in the person's residence.

A notice will be sent at least 10 days prior to scheduling the shut off of gas service for any of the above reasons. The notice may be included with the bill and includes instructions for the proper steps the customer should take to prevent shut off. The notice also gives information about the customer's right to enter into a reasonable payment plan for payment of a past due bill, to file a complaint if the amount of the bill is in dispute, and how to request a hearing before a utility hearing officer.

Shut off due to nonpayment will only occur between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. on normal business days.

SEMCO will postpone shut off of residential service for any of the following reasons:

- If a certified medical emergency exists at the premises where the gas service is rendered, SEMCO will restore service or postpone the shut off of service for up to 21 days. The customer must provide a commission-approved medical certification form signed by their physician that identifies the medical condition, any medical equipment being used, and the specific time period during which the shut off of service will aggravate the medical emergency. A copy



of the form is available by visiting [www.semcoenergygas.com](http://www.semcoenergygas.com), or by calling Customer Service at 1-800-624-2019.

- SEMCO will extend the postponement in periods of not more than 21 days, not to exceed a total of 63 days in any 12 month period per household member, only if the customer provides additional signed forms. Annually SEMCO shall not be required to grant shut off extensions totaling more than 126 days per household.
- SEMCO will restore or refrain from shutting off service to a critical care customer due to an inability to pay a utility bill where an interruption of service would be immediately life threatening. On an annual basis, the customer must provide a commission-approved medical certification form certifying his or her continued status as a critical care customer. The form must be signed by a physician or medical facility. A copy of the form is available by visiting [www.semcoenergygas.com](http://www.semcoenergygas.com), or by calling Customer Service at 1-800-624-2019.
- SEMCO will not shut off service to an eligible senior citizen during the heating season November 1 - March 31. An eligible senior citizen is a customer age 65 years or older who informs SEMCO of his or her eligibility. SEMCO will restore service to an eligible senior citizen, at the customer's request, during the heating season without payment of the amount due, deposit, reconnection fee, or other charges. Please contact SEMCO to ensure the account is properly identified.
- SEMCO will not shut off service to eligible military customers for a period of 90 days. SEMCO will continue shut off protection for an additional 90-day period as long as the customer continues to meet all criteria for being an eligible military customer and

requests that SEMCO do so. At the close of the shut off protection period, SEMCO will require the customer to pay any past due amounts in equal monthly payments over a period of up to 12 months. An eligible military customer must be a customer who is on full-time active duty or the spouse of a customer on full-time active duty. In addition, the eligible military member must be either deployed overseas as a result of declared war or undeclared hostilities or deployed in the United States in response to a declared state of national emergency resulting in a reduction in household income. The customer must inform SEMCO of his or her eligibility and provide proof of eligibility, if required.

- SEMCO will not shut off service because of the customer's failure to pay for merchandise, appliances, or service not approved as an integral part of the natural gas service.
- SEMCO will not shut off service at one residential location because of the customer's failure to pay bills at another location. However, if service is shut off at one location and the customer is using gas at another, the amount of the unpaid bills will be transferred to the active residential account.

To avoid shut off, customers are urged to contact SEMCO as soon as possible if they are having difficulty in paying bills or if they are withholding payment for any reason.

## Service Restoration

SEMCO will restore service upon customer request once the condition that caused the discontinuance is resolved. Please contact Customer Service to schedule an appointment.

## Voluntary Termination

Please contact Customer Service at 1-800-624-2019, 10 days prior to the date service needs to be stopped.

## Winter Protection Plan

Eligible low-income and senior citizen customers can enroll in the Winter Protection Plan to protect against a shut off of service during the heating season.

During the heating season, November - March, the customer pays 7% of the estimated annual bill plus a portion of any past due amount. In April, the account is reconciled and any balance remaining is billed in equal monthly installments until the beginning of the next heating season.

A customer is eligible for the Winter Protection Plan under the following provisions:

- Current proof is provided that they receive any of the following: DHHS Food or Cash Assistance Program (FAP or FIP), Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or Aid to Families with Dependent Children.
- Household income does not exceed the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) requirements for the program.
- The required amount is paid at the time protection is requested.
- Documentation is provided within 14 days proving that the customer has applied for assistance with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

## Third-Party Notification

With authorization, SEMCO will send a copy of a customer's bill to a third party. This may include a consenting relative, friend or agency. When enrolled, the third-party will receive a copy of the customer's monthly bill but is not responsible to pay the bill. A copy of the form is available by calling Customer Service at 1-800-624-2019.

# Inquiry, Service, and Complaint Procedures

Please contact Customer Service at 1-800-624-2019, or email [customer.service@semcoenergy.com](mailto:customer.service@semcoenergy.com), for any inquiries or issues relating to billing or service. For questions concerning the accuracy of a bill, please contact SEMCO promptly after it is received.

## Customer Rights and Responsibilities

In accordance with the MPSC Consumer Standards and Billing Practices, a SEMCO customer has the following options when they are unable to pay the bill or have a dispute:

### Payment Plans

If a customer is unable to pay the past due amount, promptly contact Customer Service at 1-800-624-2019. Eligible customers may be able to establish a payment plan to avoid shut off.

When enter into a payment plan, the customer agrees to pay the current charges plus a portion of the past due amount. A down payment may be required to set up the payment plan.

If a customer fails to comply with the terms of a payment plan, the service may be shut off.

### Disputing a Bill

If questions or concerns exist regarding a bill, contact SEMCO as soon as possible after the bill is received.

- If the customer and SEMCO are unable to resolve the dispute in a mutually satisfactory manner, the customer has the right to an informal hearing before a utility hearing officer. To receive a hearing, the

request must be made within five (5) days after a hearing is offered. Within ten (10) days after the date that the hearing is requested, the customer must pay the portion of the bill which is not in dispute. If this amount cannot be determined, one-half (1/2) of the total bill or \$100 must be paid, whichever is less. Failure to make the required payment may result in shut off of service.

- A hearing will be scheduled within ten (10) business days and will be held within 45 business days of the original request during normal business hours. A notice will be sent providing the time, date, and place of the scheduled hearing. Failure to attend a scheduled hearing results in forfeiture of the hearing. The customer has the right to represent themselves or be represented by a lawyer or any other person of their choice during the complaint process. The customer also has the right to examine any documents, records, or files that will be used in the hearing. All witnesses will testify under oath, and the customer has the right to question witnesses. Formal rules of evidence will not apply at the hearing and the burden of proof will rest with the utility.

At the hearing, the utility hearing officer (an impartial individual whose function is to arbitrate and resolve disputes between customers and the utility, and whose performance is subject to review by the MPSC) will listen to facts presented by the customer or their representative and by the representative of SEMCO. The officer will then make a decision based on the facts presented, which will be binding for the customer and SEMCO, to resolve the dispute. The officer will also provide a written copy of the decision and will advise the customer and SEMCO on what must be done to abide by the decision.

If the dispute is resolved in favor of the customer, any excess amount of money that was paid by the customer will be

promptly refunded with interest at a rate authorized and approved annually by the MPSC.

The customer and SEMCO have the right to appeal to the Consumer Services Division of the MPSC if either party is not satisfied with the decision of the utility hearing officer. The appeal must be made within 15 days and be made by phone, mail, or in person.

Contact information for the Consumer Services Division:

MPSC

Customer Service Division

PO Box 30221

Lansing, MI 48909

1-800-292-9555

## Data Privacy Tariff

To access SEMCO ENERGY Gas Company's data privacy tariff please visit [www.semcoenergygas.com](http://www.semcoenergygas.com).

## Excess Flow Valves

An excess flow valve (EFV) may be available for installation on the natural gas service line at your premise. Please note that such a device is not required for the normal, safe operation of the service line, but could help mitigate the consequences of certain service line failures.

### **Safety Benefits**

An EFV is a safety device that is designed to automatically stop the gas flow when a gas service line is broken. The device is normally installed near the service line's connection to the gas distribution main and protects against the uncontrolled escape of natural gas should the downstream line be broken or severed. It should be noted these devices generally do not protect against slow leaks such as those caused by corrosion, loose fittings, or leaks beyond the gas meter (house piping).

### **Installation of an EFV**

For more information about EFVs, or if you want an EFV installed on your existing residential service line, call Customer Service at 1-800-624-2019. If your service line meets the requirements for the installation of an EFV, SEMCO will set up a mutually agreeable date for installation. The cost to the customer for installation of an EFV on an existing natural gas service line is approximately \$600.

## Safety Data Sheet

SEMCO's Safety Data Sheet is available online by visiting [www.semcoenergygas.com](http://www.semcoenergygas.com).

# Gas Leak Hazards

A natural gas leak may present these hazards:

- Fire
- Explosion
- Asphyxiation (natural gas displaces oxygen in confined spaces)

These hazards can be caused by:

- Rupturing, nicking, or puncturing a pipeline.
- Uncontrolled escaping gas.
- Extreme natural events such as floods, tornadoes, and earthquakes.
- Heavy ice on outside meters or other gas pipelines.
- Fire or explosion near or directly involving a pipeline facility.
- Collapsed buildings that break or damage pipelines.
- Civil disturbances such as riots.
- Water main breaks that weaken roadways and pavement damaging pipelines.
- Under or over pressure in the pipeline system
- Equipment failure.
- Human error.

# Gas Theft

SEMCO reminds customers that gas theft attempts can be dangerous, resulting in potential leaks, fires, and in extreme cases, death.

It is SEMCO's policy to prosecute all gas thefts detected. Attempts to steal natural gas can be dangerous to the thief and to those living in the immediate area. Natural gas service is a safe and efficient energy source when maintained by trained professionals, such as SEMCO Service Technicians and certified private contractors. However, when inadequate

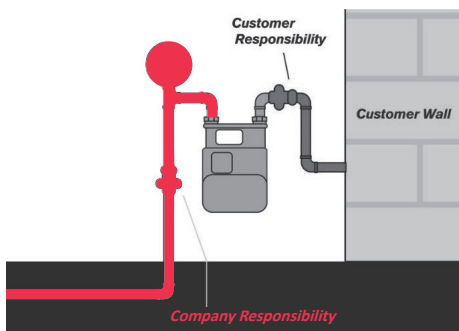


equipment is involved in making connections, natural gas can leak, creating potentially dangerous situations.

Natural gas thefts can be detected in a number of ways including routine leak surveys, emergency leak calls, routine equipment maintenance, and tips from callers.

SEMCO investigates all suspected gas theft. When a theft is confirmed, the local police are contacted and criminal charges are sought against the responsible party.

Any suspected natural gas theft should be reported by calling Customer Service at 1-800-624-2019, or to the emergency line, 1-888-GAS-1-GAS (1-888-427-1427). All anonymous tips are investigated.



## Safety Reminder

All equipment, up to and including the gas meter, is considered SEMCO property and should be serviced and maintained only by SEMCO. Customer-owned gas lines and connections between the meter and home should be serviced by a certified private contractor.

SEMCO reminds its customers not to attempt to service any natural gas equipment between the natural gas main and the meter, no matter how simple the procedure may seem.

If the gas at a SEMCO service location needs to be temporarily turned off for any reason, contact Customer Service at 1-800-624-2019 to schedule an appointment. A SEMCO Service Technician will turn off and restore service to the location by appointment.

Turning the valve leading to the gas meter on or off, or operating any SEMCO equipment, could result in a serious safety hazard. Adjusting any SEMCO equipment can also result in legal action.

Natural gas is a safe, efficient energy source when connected and maintained by trained professionals, such as SEMCO Service Technicians.

## Rules for Safety

Like many other products, natural gas can present hazards if misused. SEMCO encourages customers to follow these simple rules of safety:

1. Follow the manufacturer's instructions in the care and operation of appliances.
2. Always make sure that no gas has accumulated around the pilot or burner before attempting to light it.
3. Keep all combustibles away from the flames of gas appliances.
4. Make sure the flues of any appliances are kept clean and properly ventilated.
5. Only persons 18 years or older should turn on or light appliances.
6. Natural gas appliances, such as a furnace or water heaters, should always be installed, repaired, and maintained by trained professionals (SEMCO does not provide installation or repair services).

# Call 811 Before You Dig

It is now easier than ever to contact MISS DIG 811 either by phone or online.

MISS DIG offers 811, a toll-free, nationwide “Call Before You Dig” number. Just dial 811 and the call will be routed to the local Call Before You Dig system to quickly begin the process of getting underground utility lines marked. MISS DIG 811 System, Inc. will notify affected member utility companies to send crews to mark underground lines for free.

When excavating near buried gas piping, the piping should be located in advance. Once underground gas piping has been located and marked by the utility company, all digging near the buried piping must be done by hand to prevent damage.

## Why call MISS DIG 811?

Michigan law requires property owners to contact MISS DIG 811 three business days before beginning any project involving digging. This helps avoid possible injuries or damage to natural gas, oil, electric, telephone, TV cable, and water or sewer facilities. Failure to call MISS DIG 811 could leave costly repair bills for damaged utility-owned lines.

## POSITIVE RESPONSE

The Positive Response tool collects information, from utility owners, as to the locating status of a ticket. Excavators can use Positive Response to verify if their ticket has been marked, is clear, or if utilities have yet to respond.

This information is administered by MISS DIG and is available, with the ticket number, online at [response.missdig.org](http://response.missdig.org), or via automated phone system at 800-763-3888.

## VERIFY Utility Location

Once the underground utility(s) have been marked and before excavating, the excavator shall expose the marked utility by soft excavation (hand digging) to verify its location.

If there are questions, contact the utility owner by calling the phone number that is on the flags.

## What MISS DIG 811 does not cover

Please be aware that any “customer-owned” pipes or lines in a project area are the responsibility of the homeowner for locating and marking before a project begins. Customer-owned pipes and lines are between the gas meter and any gas appliances. These include connections to yard lights, pool and spa heaters, garages, workshops, and similar areas.

To learn more about the MISS DIG 811 program, visit [www.missdig.org](http://www.missdig.org).

## Service Line Safety and Maintenance

SEMCO maintains all gas and service lines that connect the gas distribution system to the meter. Customers are responsible for “customer-owned lines”, or the lines between the gas meter and any gas appliances. This includes underground lines on the property to yard lights, pool and spa heaters, garages, workshops, and similar areas. Please make it a routine to check all gas lines for leaks and corrosion. Below are some signs to look for when a leak is suspected:

- Blowing or hissing sounds.
- Brown patches of vegetation on or near a right-of-way.
- Bubbling water at a pond, creek or river.
- Gas Odor
- Dry spot in moist earth.

In some rare cases, natural gas may not be detected by smell. If a hazard is suspected, leave the area and call SEMCO immediately at 1-888-GAS-1-GAS (1-888-427-1427). A Service Technician will check the line and shut off the gas supply if a safety hazard exists.

After a certified private contractor makes the necessary repairs to the customer-owned lines, a SEMCO Service Technician will restore the gas service, at customer request.

## Pipeline Markers

In certain situations or conditions, SEMCO is required to identify where pipelines are located by using pipeline markers. The pipeline markers currently used by SEMCO typically look like the following:



For locating and staking of SEMCO facilities contact MISS DIG 811. Anyone who plans to dig near a utility's facility is required to call MISS DIG 811 three days prior to digging.

For gas leak emergencies contact 1-888-GAS-1-GAS (1-888-427-1427).

## Other Pipelines

For a listing of pipelines, please visit the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS) website at <https://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov>.

This website enables the user to view the NPMS data one county at a time. NPMS data is for reference purposes only. It should never be used as a substitute for contacting 811 prior to excavation activities.

## Gas Leaks and Emergencies

Knowing what a natural gas emergency is and how to react will help keep customers safe. Examples of natural gas emergencies are natural gas leaks and damaged underground pipelines or service lines. Leaks can occur on indoor or outdoor lines when damaged. If a natural gas emergency is suspected, go to a safe location. Then, call SEMCO ENERGY Gas Company, at 1-888-427-1427.

## The Three “R’s” of Natural Gas Safety

Knowing how to Recognize, React, and Report natural gas emergencies can eliminate or minimize their consequences.

### **Recognize**

Signs of a natural gas leak include:

- A sulfur odor
- A blowing or hissing sound
- Dead or discolored vegetation in an otherwise green area
- Flames, if a leak has ignited
- Dirt or dust blowing from a hole in the ground
- Bubbling in wet or flooded areas

### **React**

If a natural gas leak is suspected, follow these steps:

- Leave the area immediately and call SEMCO at 1-888-427-1427; then, follow the instructions provided.

- Do not use any electrical device, such as light switches, telephones, appliances, or such as garage door openers. They could spark and ignite the gas.
- Do not use an open flame, such as matches or lighters.
- Do not try to locate the source of the gas leak.
- Do not try to shut off any gas valves or appliances.
- Do not start any vehicles.
- Do not re-enter the building or return to the area until a SEMCO employee says it is safe to do so.
- Do not put out the flame, if the natural gas ignites; let it burn. Burning gas will not explode.

Do not restart the equipment if during digging a natural gas pipeline may have been damaged, leave the area immediately. If motorized equipment is being used and the motor can be turned off safely, do so to prevent the ignition of any leaking gas. Then, abandon the equipment and leave the area.

**Report**

Calls to 1-888-427-1427 can be made 24 hours a day, seven days a week. SEMCO will respond promptly and at no charge.

## Contact Information

To request a copy of the SEMCO Customer Booklet contact:

SEMCO ENERGY Gas Company

PO Box 5004

Port Huron, MI 48061-5004

1-800-624-2019

### Customer Service/Inquiries

1-800-624-2019

[customer.service@semcoenergy.com](mailto:customer.service@semcoenergy.com)

[www.semcoenergygas.com](http://www.semcoenergygas.com)

### Gas Leaks and Emergencies

1-888-GAS-1-GAS (1-888-427-1427)

ev. 10/25





