



Responding to a Gas Odor

What should you do if you smell a natural gas odor?

1. If you notice the odor:
 - If the odor is discovered in a **small/confined area**, leave the area and contact FMS FIXIT during working hours at **412-268-2910**, Contact University Police after working hours at **412-268-2323**.
 - If you notice the odor is migrating to **multiple areas on your floor or multiple floors, activate the fire alarm and evacuate the building**. Report the leak to FMS FIXIT during working hours at **412-268-2910**, Contact University Police after working hours at **412-268-2323**.
 - a. Alert those around you, then evacuate the building using the nearest available exit. If you are unable to evacuate, go to the designated Area of Rescue Assistance or nearest stairwell.
 - b. Once outside of the building, go to the Evacuation Assembly Area or move outside to at least 1,000 feet from the building.
 - c. DO NOT reenter the building until authorized emergency personnel give the "all-clear" signal.
2. DO NOT try to find the odor source/leak yourself.
3. Let responders know if you experience symptoms related to the odor such as dizziness or headaches.

What will responding departments do?

University Police Department (UPD):

- UPD dispatcher will contact FMS and EHS to respond and begin an investigation.
- If UPD receives multiple calls from building occupants identifying the odor on more than one floor UP will:
 - ✓ Activate the fire alarm, (if it has not been activated yet).
 - ✓ Assist with the building evacuation.
 - ✓ Contact People's Gas Company to notify them of the gas odor.
 - ✓ Ensure City of Pittsburgh 911 has been alerted.

Facilities Management Services (FMS) and Environmental Health & Safety (EHS):

- Respond to noted location(s) and use appropriate monitoring equipment to sample air quality.
- If air monitoring identifies elevated levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) or lower explosive limits (LELs), the building alarm will be activated, if not already in alarm.
- FMS will locate and contain any leak and implement other remediation/containment such as ventilation actions.

When will we be able to reenter?

- UPD/FMS/EHS leadership will notify tenants when safe to reenter.
- While safe, residual gas odor may be still present; allow for ventilation.

Natural gas contains the additive methyl mercaptan, which gives natural gas (naturally odorless) its characteristic, pungent rotten-egg odor. Methyl mercaptan has a very low odor threshold of 0.002 parts per million (ppm), meaning it can be smelled at very low concentrations. So even if you can smell the odor of the methyl mercaptan in natural gas, it does not automatically mean that dangerous levels of natural gas are present. It certainly, however, warrants investigation of the source of the odor.