Natural Gas

Safety Information

Cross Bores &
Sewer Work Safeguards

Informacion el español en el interior
“Cross Bores” are Natural Gas Lines Intersecting a Sewer or Septic Line

For many years, utilities nationwide have installed gas pipelines by boring underground rather than digging trenches. A “cross bore” happens when the new pipe is inadvertently installed through an existing sewer or septic line.

This is a rare occurrence and isn’t a safety hazard if the natural gas pipe is undamaged. However, if a natural gas line is cut or damaged while using a rooter device or other equipment to unclog the pipes, it can create a serious hazard. This damage can lead to a natural gas leak that could result in a fire or explosion, possibly causing injury or death to those who unclog the sewer pipes and to those in structures attached to the sewer or septic pipe.

Sense a Bump? Call It In?

If you begin clearing a sewer or septic pipe and sense or see, but haven’t penetrated, an obstruction in the pipe, call Southwest Gas at 877-860-6020 and press “9” for immediate assistance. A Southwest Gas representative will be there as soon as possible to ensure that a gas pipe hasn’t been damaged. There’s no charge for this service.

Know How to Recognize and Respond to a Gas Emergency

TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION IF YOU ENCOUNTER ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SIGNS WHEN YOU CLEAN OUT A SEWER OR SEPTIC LINE WITH A ROOTER DEVICE:

• A sulfur-like natural gas odor, similar to rotten eggs, at the cleanout or inside the building served by the sewer or septic line, even if it’s faint or momentary.
• Bubbles rising through standing water or in the toilet bowl.

IF THESE SIGNS ARE PRESENT:

• Stop all work immediately.
• Evacuate everyone from the premises and leave doors open as you leave.
• From a safe place, call 911 and Southwest Gas at 877-860-6020 immediately, day or night. A Southwest Gas representative will be there as soon as possible.
• Don’t use an automated door or turn on or off any electric switches, thermostats, or appliance controls.
• Don’t smoke or use lighters or matches, or do anything that could cause a spark.
To learn more about cross bore safety, visit callbeforeyouclear.com or swgas.com/safety.

For more information about natural gas safety, including hazard recognition and emergency action, please see our Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). To obtain our MSDS call 877-860-6020 or visit swgas.com/safety.