

For Immediate Release

October 30, 2012

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Columbia Gas of Ohio offers tips in the wake of Hurricane Sandy flooding

With the possibility of flooding due to Hurricane Sandy, Columbia Gas of Ohio offers several tips to ensure safety for those with natural gas appliances:

- If flooding is imminent:
 - Turn off electrical power to each appliance and leave it off.
 - If removing a natural gas appliance, the open end of the pipe leading from the valve to the appliance should be capped or plugged to prevent leakage. This will also prevent floodwater from getting into the gas piping system.
 - If evacuating the premises and the safe opportunity exists, shut off the gas valve at the meter. You can turn your gas off at the main shut-off valve on the inlet pipe next to your gas meter. Using a wrench or other suitable tool, give the valve a quarter turn in either direction so that it is crosswise (perpendicular) to the pipe. **As a reminder: Do not attempt to restore your service. Natural gas service must be restored by Columbia Gas.**
- If flooding has already occurred, and if you hear gas escaping, smell gas in multiple rooms, or smell gas inside or outside of the premises, leave the area, and call Columbia Gas immediately at 1-800-344-4077.

Columbia Gas customers that notice a strong gas odor, or if there is other evidence of a natural gas leak:

- Do not enter the premises. If you smell the odor of natural gas inside your home, please leave immediately.
- As a precaution, do not smoke, make a spark or flame, switch the lights on/off or raise/lower the windows.
- **Call the 24-hour emergency number for Columbia Gas of Ohio at 1-800-344-4077 or your local emergency response number, from nearby.**
- Stay nearby until a Columbia Gas representative arrives, or leave a note on you door stating where you can be reached.
- Don't return until you get the all-clear indication that all is safe.

Following a flood:

- If water levels were high enough to cover the gas meter, call Columbia Gas to check your meter and regulator before using your gas system. Floodwaters may have shifted your home or caused other stresses to the natural gas piping.
- Never attempt to place natural gas appliances back in service. A licensed plumber or contractor will check, clean, repair and pressure test all gas pipes, which may have been clogged with mud or debris.

In order to have service restored, areas in and around the affected units must provide a safe and healthy working environment for Columbia Gas representatives. This includes:

- Clear, safe access to the appliance
- Removal of water from the basement
- Cleaning of debris from each appliance, including the burner, pilot tubing and assembly.

Customers may call the Columbia Gas emergency phone number at 1-800-344-4077 to report an emergency or schedule an appointment to have service restored.

Columbia Gas of Ohio safely delivers clean and efficient natural gas to approximately 1.4 million customers in 61 of Ohio's 88 counties. With headquarters in Columbus, it is one of the seven energy distribution companies of NiSource Inc. (NYSE: NI) and is the largest natural gas utility in the state. NiSource companies deliver energy to approximately 3.8 million customers located within the high-demand energy corridor stretching from the Gulf Coast through the Midwest to New England. More information about Columbia Gas of Ohio is available at: ColumbiaGasOhio.com. Be sure to call 811 at least two business days before you dig. For information about natural gas safety and what to do if you suspect a gas leak, go to: www.safegasohio.org.

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