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For Immediate Release

Ameren Missouri helping gas customers stay warm this winter, offers safety tips in advance of winter

COLUMBIA, MO (Oct. 18, 2018) – Tis the season to turn on your furnace and warm up in front of a fireplace, which makes Fall a great time to schedule tune-ups for natural gas equipment. It's also the perfect time to review natural gas safety measures, which is why Ameren Missouri reminds customers to take immediate action if they smell natural gas or suspect a leak.

"Natural gas is colorless and odorless, so use your senses. For your safety, a distinctive, pungent odor – similar to rotten eggs – is added so you can recognize it quickly. A customer should never smell natural gas in or around their home or business," said Pam Harrison, director of gas operations for Ameren Missouri. "If you suspect a gas leak, leave immediately and alert Ameren Missouri after you are out of the building. Our crews will respond immediately, seven days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and there is absolutely no charge to the customer for a legitimate concern about a gas leak."

Harrison said that learning important safety tips about natural gas will help keep families and businesses safe. She reminds customers of these important safety tips:

- Smell Gas? Leave Fast! That distinctive "rotten egg" odor makes it easy to sniff out a gas leak. In addition, a hissing or roaring sound or an unusual area of dead vegetation, blowing dirt or bubbling water can all indicate a gas leak.
- If you suspect a gas leak, evacuate the premises immediately, taking pets, too. On your way out of the building, **do not use** light switches, cell phones, garage door openers or any electrical device that could generate a spark.
- Once you are safe, call **Ameren Missouri** at **1.800.552.7583** to report the suspected leak. The company responds to gas leak calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week – free of charge.
- When someone calls Ameren Missouri Customer Care to report a gas leak, their call is escalated and an Ameren first responder is immediately dispatched to the area. Upon arrival to the premise, the first responder will perform a leak investigation to determine if a leak exists and the appropriate remedial action.
- In some instances when a leak is confirmed, service must be shut off until a qualified HVAC contractor can make repairs.

"Natural gas is a safe and reliable source of energy, but it can be hazardous if customers ignore possible leaks," Harrison said. "We urge our customers to play it safe and alert us if they suspect a problem."



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Harrison also offered these tips to keep gas appliances operating safely:

- Have a qualified heating contractor inspect your furnace annually. A properly tuned furnace saves energy and helps avoid costly repairs.
- Check the flue to make sure it is clean and open. Any fuel that does not burn completely can create harmful levels of carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide is a gas with no color, odor or taste. It can collect in your home if a fuel-burning appliance isn't working properly or venting as it should.
- Keep forced-air furnace filters clean. Clean or replace them according to the manufacturer's recommendation.
- Avoid using or storing these products near the furnace: paint stripper, fabric or water softener, bleach, adhesives, or salt for melting ice. The chlorine or fluorine in these items can lead to furnace corrosion.
- Keep your heat registers and cold-air returns clean so the air can flow properly. Also, arrange your furniture and drapes so they don't block the air flow.
- Have your gas fireplace routinely serviced by a professional to ensure proper working order.
- In the event of a power outage, do not use natural gas stove burners or the oven to heat your home.

When replacing natural gas products such as water heaters and furnaces, Ameren Missouri encourages customers to invest in energy efficient products. As an Ameren Missouri natural gas customer, you can save energy and earn rebates with our Ameren Missouri Natural Gas Efficiency Program. Visit AmerenMissouri.com/NaturalGas for details about cash back rebates, eligibility requirements and rebate forms.

Ameren Missouri has been providing electric and gas service for more than 100 years, and the company's electric rates are among the lowest in the nation. Ameren Missouri's mission is to power the quality of life for its 1.2 million electric and 130,000 natural gas customers in central and eastern Missouri. The company's service area covers 64 counties and more than 500 communities, including the greater St. Louis area. For more information, visit Ameren.com/Missouri or follow us at [@AmerenMissouri](https://www.facebook.com/AmerenMissouri) or [Facebook.com/AmerenMissouri](https://www.facebook.com/AmerenMissouri).

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