



# Safe Excavation in the Vicinity of Natural Gas Pipelines

## General

- Care must be taken when conducting ground disturbance (digging, directional drilling) in the vicinity of natural gas mains and services to prevent damage and maintain safety.
  - Treat all pipelines as live until confirmed as abandoned as there may occasionally be locate inaccuracies.
- Enbridge Gas (or associated affiliates within Ontario or Quebec) vital pipelines will be identified through the locate process and may require an Enbridge Gas representative to be on site to ensure that activity is being completed safely.
- If mechanical equipment is required, the Enbridge Gas pipeline must first be exposed using hand tools (i.e., a shovel with a wooden or fiberglass handle or an equivalent alternative) for positive visual identification.
  - Picks, bars, stakes or other earth piercing devices are not considered hand tools.
  - Until the Enbridge Gas pipeline has been positively visually identified, mechanical excavation is not permitted within:
    - 5 m (16 ft) of CER-regulated vital pipelines
    - 3 m (10 ft) of vital pipelines
    - 1 m (3.3 ft) of non-vital pipelines
  - When using mechanical equipment, excavate parallel to the Enbridge Gas Inc. pipeline.
- When using hydro-excavation as an equivalent alternative to hand digging:
  - Use a spinning nozzle tip with a water pressure not exceeding 17,236 kPa (2,500 psi).
  - Keep the wand moving and prevent it from being pointed directly at the pipeline.
  - Keep the end of the wand a distance of 20 cm (8 in) from the subsoil being excavated.
  - If heated water is being used, the temperature must not exceed 38 °C (100 °F).
- Following completing positive visual identification, non-mechanical equipment (i.e., hand digging or hydro-excavation) must be used when working within 1 m (3.3 ft) of any vital or 0.3 m (1 ft) of any non-vital Enbridge Gas pipeline.

## Points of Thrust

- A point of thrust is a pipeline joint that may require additional restraint prior to being exposed as part of ground disturbance in order to prevent an incident.
- Points of thrust will be identified through the locate process and may require additional precautions to be taken when working in their vicinity.
- If a point of thrust is identified through the locate process, Enbridge Gas may require additional time to review the proposed work area when a locate clearance is requested.
- In the event that the excavation involves exposing a point of thrust or exposing an area near a point of thrust, Enbridge Gas may provide specific instructions that are to be followed, or will attend the site to preemptively mitigate the point of thrust.
- Failure to follow these instructions can result in significant harm to persons, property or the environment.

## Unknown or Damaged Natural Gas Pipelines

If you cause damage to a natural gas line or find an unknown line that appears to be abandoned or incorrectly located on your records, do not assume it is abandoned. You should immediately:

1. Stop your work.
2. Move to a safe distance.
3. Call **911** if there is escaping gas.
4. Call the Enbridge Gas emergency line at **1-866-763-5427**.

For more detailed information on the above, please review the Enbridge Gas [Third-Party Requirements in the Vicinity of Natural Gas Facilities Standard](#) which is also available from the [Enbridge Gas "Before you dig" webpage](#).