

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL



AWARENESS ALERT

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AWARENESS ALERT 17-1

**New Jersey Statewide Safety Team
Natural Gas Leak Response Awareness for Emergency Responders
For Immediate Distribution to All Emergency Responders
Issued January 9, 2017**

Message:

Ground frost during the winter season increases the risk of natural gas migrating into buildings where explosive levels of natural gas can accumulate. Based on observations from recent gas leak exercises, the New Jersey Statewide Safety Team recommend the following precautions, beyond the normal gas leak protocols be taken to protect emergency responders and the public:

- When responding to a gas leak call
 - Limit potential ignition sources by:
 - Parking away from manholes, storm drains and valves boxes
 - When alerting residents, knock on doors, DO NOT ring door bells
 - Do not use electronic devices unless intrinsically safe
 - Park away from the suspected leak & walk into the area – be aware for signs of gas leaking
 - odor, sounds - gas blowing / hissing or signs of gas vapor
 - When signs of a gas leak are detected especially gas in structures, evacuate immediately
 - When in doubt, evacuate and secure the area for 330 feet (a football field)
- When evacuating buildings
 - Instruct building occupants to evacuate immediately and not to smoke, use electric devices (e.g. switches, automatic garage doors) or electronic devices (cell / smart phones)
 - Move them at least 330 feet (a football field) away from the building with the gas leak
 - Evacuate surrounding structures – note: multiple buildings may have gas leaking
 - Secure the area, establish the hot zone and plan for the arrival of additional responders
 - Manage the evacuees – collect contact information and do not let them back into the area until safe readings are obtained with gas detection equipment

- **Protect emergency responders by using distance and shielding**

- Plan for and have a contingency for a building explosion or explosions
 - Keep responders at least 330 feet away from gas filled structures
 - Limit responder access less than 330 feet to those needed in that area
 - Use large vehicles to shield responders from potential explosions / blast zones
 - Keep command post and staging areas shielded
 - Locate command post and staging areas uphill & upwind
 - Turn-on and zero Combustible Gas Meters before entering the leak area
 - 10% LEL or higher reading, evacuate building including emergency responders
- Share information about the scene with other responders and the gas company
 - Information may include: best route in / staging, gas reading levels detected in buildings, and evacuations

Link to additional information and Training:

- <http://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/comm/EmergencyOfficials.htm>
- https://www.aegislink.com/content/aegislink/services/losscontrol/videos/emergency_responders.html

Information about the New Jersey Statewide Safety Team:

The **New Jersey Statewide Safety Team** is focused on enhancing coordination between and among emergency responders and response groups including strengthening the public-private partnership. Working together to better understand the response needs and protocols of the different emergency response groups, the NJ Statewide Safety Team develops coordinated approaches and shares information that enhances coordinated response capabilities and team work.

If you have any information to share or feedback, please contact one of the Team Co-Chairpersons.

New Jersey Statewide Safety Team Co-Chairperson Contact Information:

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New Jersey Statewide Safety Team - Current Participating Agencies / Public-Private Partners:

US Department Of Transportation - Pipeline & Hazardous Material Safety Administration		
New Jersey Board of Public Utilities	Millburn Fire Department	AEGIS Loss Control
New Jersey Division of Fire Safety	Monmouth County OEM	Elizabethtown Gas
Bayonne Fire department	Newark Fire Department	New Jersey Natural Gas
Clifton Fire Department	Ocean County Sheriff	Public Service Electric & Gas
Cresskill Fire Department	Toms River Fire Department	South Jersey Gas
Elizabeth Fire Department	Scotch Plains Township Building Department	
Linden Police Department		

Note: Additional Public–Private partners participate on an as needed–basis to address specific issues.