



Pending snow: BC Safety Authority advises homeowners to protect their gas meters

A year ago, a BC home was almost gutted by a fire that started from a leak at the gas meter. It was determined that while the homeowner had been clearing snow off his sundeck, a large pack of snow landed on the gas meter, causing damage that led to the gas leak.

The BC Safety Authority (BCSA) is reminding homeowners to take extra care of their gas meters this winter.

“Your gas meter, which measures the amount of gas that you use, is an important part of your gas system,” said Wayne Lock, Provincial Gas Safety Manager with the BC Safety Authority. “Snow and ice on a meter can damage its fittings and pipes.

“This could also stop the gas regulator from doing its job of controlling the gas pressure which could lead to serious risks.”

Here are a few tips on how to properly care for your gas meter in the winter:

- Be familiar with your meter, its shut-off valve, and piping.
- Keep your meter accessible: never bury it or enclose it in a building or a deck.
- Never lean anything on your meter. Never tie anything that might tug on it, like a clothesline.
- Be extra careful when removing snow from around the house. Don't use a snowplow or blower near the meter.
- Carefully remove any snow build-up on your meter with your hands. Don't kick or strike any ice off your meter.
- When removing snow from rooftops or when shoveling, take care not to cover the meter with ice and snow.

Have the phone numbers of your gas supplier ready in case of emergencies.

“Call your gas supplier immediately if your gas meter becomes encased in ice,” said Lock.

Natural and propane gas leaks emit an unpleasant odour like rotten eggs or sulphur. That way, if there's ever a gas leak in your vicinity, you'll easily smell it and know what it is. If you smell gas or hear the flow of escaping gas, follow these steps immediately:

- Don't smoke, light matches, operate electrical switches, use a cell phone or telephone, or create any other source of ignition.
- Leave the building immediately, leaving the door open and any windows that may already be open.
- When you are at a safe distance, call your gas supplier or 911 immediately.

For more safety tips that you can download, print and share with your family and friends go to www.safetyauthority.ca and follow this path: Safety Information – Public Safety Tips. Gas safety tips are also available at www.terasengas.com.

The BC Safety Authority is an independent, self-funded organization that inspires safety excellence in British Columbia by collaborating with business, industry and the general public to enhance the safety of technical systems, products, equipment and work.

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