

About ORS

The South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) Pipeline Safety Department represents the public interest with regard to safety oversight for operators of natural gas distribution and transmission pipeline systems, liquefied natural gas facilities, certain liquefied propane systems, landfill gas systems, and lateral pipelines from interstate pipeline systems in South Carolina.

The ORS' trained Pipeline Safety Inspectors perform on-site inspections to verify and enforce compliance with the US Department of Transportation's 49 CFR Pipeline Safety Regulations, as well as the Public Service Commission of South Carolina's regulations governing gas system operators.

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South Carolina Damage Prevention Initiative



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The South Carolina Damage Prevention Initiative is a partnership between SC811 and the ORS to inform contractors and excavators about state and federal natural gas laws pertaining to contractor responsibility, damages, and associated penalties.

Title 49 - Transportation Code of Federal Regulations

Natural gas operators have to follow Title 49 - Transportation Code of Federal Regulations (CFR49) to operate their systems in the state. CFR49 Code 192.614 lays out what an operator must comply with to address damage prevention.

Contractors also have a responsibility to prevent damages from occurring. (Subpart B Title 49 – Transportation 196.101 through 196.107 list the damage prevention for excavators.)

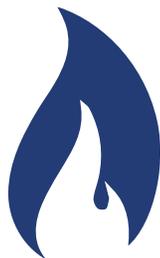
Referenced below are some of the criminal enforcements codes from CFR49:

- Code 190.291
- Code 190.293



Natural Gas Quick Facts

- The flammable range of gas in air is from a lower explosive limit (LEL) of about 4.5 percent to an upper explosive limit (UEL) of about 14.5 percent.
- The natural gas we use every day contains about 92 percent methane, which is very similar to gas emitted and re-captured from old landfills
- Natural gas is colorless, odorless, and non-toxic when it is extracted from the ground, but it has a harmless chemical added to it that smells like rotten eggs so that it is readily detectable.
- Natural gas is lighter than air; therefore it will rise (or vent) to the utmost area possible



SC811 State Law

Contractor Responsibility

An excavator can proceed working if there are no visible signs of a facility. However, if an operator sees any sign of natural gas, he must call SC811 and the utility has three hours to come mark the lines.

Three full working days before an excavation project, a contractor must contact SC811 or submit a locate request online. The tolerance zone is 24 inches on either side of the utility mark plus half of the diameter of the facility. An excavator may not perform any excavation or demolition within the tolerance zone unless the following conditions are met:

- No use of mechanized equipment, except non-invasive equipment, such as a hydrovac or hand digging, intended to protect the integrity of the facility, within marked tolerance zone of an existing facility until:
 - The excavator has visually identified the precise location of the facility, or no facility is present down to the depth of excavation.
 - Reasonable precautions are taken to avoid any substantial weakening of the facility's structural or lateral support, or both, or penetration or destruction of the facilities or their protective coatings.
- Maintain clearance between a facility and the cutting edge or point of any mechanized equipment. One should always hand dig to expose facilities in the tolerance zone.
- Provide support for facilities in and near the excavation or demolition area, including backfill operations.

Damages

Repair of any damage shall be performed, in a reasonable amount of time, by the operator or by qualified personnel.

No backfilling can be done until authorized by the operator.

If an excavator causes damage that results in the escape of any dangerous substance, the contractor must notify emergency services, including 911, the notification center, and the operator. The excavator should respond within one-hour.

The excavator must protect themselves and their surroundings until proper personnel have arrived and completed their assessment.

Penalties

Civil penalties, not exceeding \$1,000 for each violation, can be assessed to any person who violates Section 58.

Actions to recover the penalty shall be brought by the SC Attorney General at the request of the injured party in the proper forum.

All penalties recovered shall be equally divided between the state's general fund and the SC Attorney General.