# Strong OdorsPurple text on a black background University of Washington Environmental Health & Safety logo.

Natural gas is a safe and clean source of energy and used throughout campus, but like any gas, there is potential for it be released unintentionally. Your response to a natural gas leak will be similar to other emergencies that make an area temporarily unsafe: evacuate.

*The University provides the following instructions to help UW personnel, students and visitors prepare for responding to an emergency on the Seattle campus. University units and departments can modify these instructions for their specific location(s) and add them to their Fire Safety and Evacuation Plans.*

## Natural Gas

Natural gas is flammable; leaks can lead to fire and explosion. Natural gas **smells a little like rotten eggs**; you can smell leaking gas even at very low concentrations. All natural gas odors should be treated seriously and need to be reported.

## If you Smell Natural Gas:

* **Turn off** all sources of ignition (open flames, electrical equipment).
* **Laboratories:** Check gas outlets for open valves and local gas tubing for leaks.
* **On the Seattle campus, call UW Facilities** at 206-685-1411 (answered 24/7) to investigate building systems and equipment for leaks.

## Natural Gas Odor is Strong, Widespread and/or Quickly Worsening

* **Evacuate the area,** turning off all sources of ignition (open flames, electrical equipment) as you exit.
* **Close local and emergency valves if present**. Close all gas outlets and the emergency gas valve for your floor, laboratory, or area (if one exists).
* **Activate the fire alarm.** If the building is equipped with a fire alarm system, activate the alarm at a pull station.
* **Stay out.** Do *not* return to an evacuated building unless told to do so by the on-scene authority (fire department, police department or other authorized personnel).

## Other Strong Odors

* **Investigate** whether the source is isolated in your area. If not, check the hallway and adjacent areas to determine if the odor is widespread.
* **Take action** if the source is obvious and something can be done without putting anyone at risk. For example, eliminate or control the odor by moving a laboratory benchtop procedure to a fume hood**.**
* **Contact Environmental Health & Safety** at 206-543-7262 or [airquality@uw.edu](mailto:airquality@uw.edu) if you experience symptoms or illness.
* **Construction site odors** (e.g., diesel fumes, dust, asphalt, or roofing): Contact UW Facilities at 206-543-5200.
* **Tobacco smoke:** Contact Environmental Health & Safetyat 206-616-1623 or [phdept@uw.edu](mailto:phdept@uw.edu).

**Refer to the Indoor Air Quality page on the** [**Environmental Health & Safety website**](https://www.ehs.washington.edu/) **for additional information.**