



NEWS RELEASE

Xcel Energy Media Relations
1800 Larimer St., Suite #1400
Denver, CO 80202
(303) 294-2300
www.xcelenergy.com

April 11, 2014

Customers in mountain areas urged to remove ice, snow from gas meters and areas around meters

DENVER – With freezing conditions merging with warmer temperatures, the stage is set for potentially dangerous incidents caused by snow- or ice-covered gas meters and blocked access to damaged gas meters. Xcel Energy strongly urges customers to take action to prevent property damage and personal injury.

Customers should check their gas meters, and very gently remove snow or ice from it and any associated piping and the roofline above the meter. Carefully shovel around the meter and clear the meter itself by hand. Avoid using any sharp tool, shovels or snow blowers on or near the meter and piping.

If using snow and ice removal equipment on rooftops, use extreme caution while diverting it away from the meter. Maintain a clear path to and from the meter to allow easy access in the event of an emergency. Snow blower or snowplow operators should not push snow into or around outside gas meters. Watch [this video](#) to see how to safely clear snow and ice from natural gas meters.

Buried or iced-over meters can prevent the gas meter's regulator vent from operating properly, reducing the flow of natural gas or increasing the pressure in natural gas lines to dangerous levels. Snow and ice from roofs or building overhangs can also damage meters as snow falls on meters or water from melted snow drips onto meters and freezes as temperatures drop.

The weight of accumulated snow can cause roofs to collapse, as occurred recently when an apartment complex was evacuated after a roofing material fell and broke a meter, allowing natural gas to escape into the building. Even with the assistance of the local fire department, it took Xcel Energy crews several hours to uncover the meter so the flow of gas could be stopped.

Xcel Energy reminds natural gas customers that if they smell natural gas in their homes or businesses to leave immediately and to follow these other important safety precautions:

- Don't turn lights on or off or use any other electrical switches, including garage door openers, under any circumstances.
- Don't open any windows or doors other than the ones you pass through on your way out.

- Don't use a cell phone or any other phone while still in the house; go to a neighbor's house or other safe place away from your home to call Xcel Energy's gas emergency number -- 1-800-895-2999 -- for help, or 911 in an emergency.
- Don't return to the home until a safety expert such as a utility company employee or firefighter says it's safe to do so.
- Before removing snow from rooftops or trees, always first look up to find any overhead power line and then keep yourself and any tool you're using a minimum of 10 feet away. Assume all power lines are energized and therefore dangerous.

#